Daily Report

Central Eurasia

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FBIS-SOV-96-102 *24 May 1996*

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Russia: Filatov Cited on Yeltsin Rating, Possible Chechnya Visit

MM2405101696 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 24 May 96 p 2

[Nikolay Demidov report: "Sergey Filatov: Moods Are Varied, But Rating Is Going Up"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election race is gathering pace with every passing day. The Russian presidential candidates are now looking for supporters in the regions, explaining their positions, and, of course, promising a great deal. This is understandable. The candidate who does not promise anything will simply not be elected. That is why some are unthinkingly determining the average level of wages and pensions at 3 million rubles [R] (from what resources? Surely not from their own pocket), while others are threatening to establish order with a firm hand.

One way or another, the visits to the "heartland" are having a certain effect. S. Filatov, leader of the coordinating committee of the all-Russia movement of public support for B. Yeltsin in the Russian Federation presidential election, has informed journalists that Boris Nikolayevich's rating is rising steadily. Where the reforms are nevertheless advancing, attitudes to the current Russian Federation president are favorable. The mood is different in the "difficult" areas.

For example, in Vladimir Oblast the private farmers are offended. They are offering their potatoes at only R800 per kg. However, the whims of the market are such that they are not allowed into the capital with their cut-price goods. Moscow traders do not need competition like this. It is not hard to guess what the agrarians think of the country's leadership. And attitudes toward people campaigning for B. Yeltsin are varied. Certain heads of administration are giving a cordial reception to members of the movement headed by S. Filatov, while others are refusing to come out of their offices to shake the visitors' hands. There have even been cases of threats being made against the president's supporters.

Despite B. Yeltsin's recent documents aimed at improving the situation in the country, the measures aimed at the timely payment of pensions and wages, and the fight against corruption, the country is divided. S. Filatov assessed this situation as a prewar situation. According to his information, another wave of strikes is being prepared. And then feelings are also running high about the appearance of the so-called third force.

Nevertheless, B. Yeltsin is going to continue his trips around the country virtually until mid-June. It is planned that he will meet the voters of the North Caucasus region. Answering a question from RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA about whether Boris Nikolayevich's dangerous trip to Chechnya is really so necessary, S. Filatov answered:

"The idea of the trip came from the Russian president himself. It is currently being discussed whether he should go or not. The military are trying to dissuade him and proposing that the problem be solved in a different way. The leadership of Chechnya is asking him to come anyway, since Russians live there. The Security Council has yet to discuss this question, but for the moment Boris Nikolayevich has not made any other decision."

Russia: Military Deputy Interviewed on Work for Yeltsin Campaign

MM2405082196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 22 May 96 p 1

[Interview with Colonel of Justice Yuriy Voyevoda, State Duma deputy, by Captain 1st Rank Valeriy Gromak; place and date not given: "Colonel of Justice Yuriy Voyevoda: 'I Am Certain of Yeltsin Victory'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Colonel of Justice Yuriy Voyevoda is well known to inhabitants of Russia's westernmost oblast and to soldiers of Kaliningrad Special Region. In his role as a State Duma deputy he has done much for both local residents and military personnel. Our correspondent Captain 1st Rank Valeriy Gromak met with Yuriy Voyevoda at a Baltic Fleet marine brigade during the unveiling of a monument to soldiers who have fallen in Chechnya.

[Gromak] Yuriy Yevgenyevich, ahead of the elections several politicians are making the absolute most of the topic of the Chechen drama in an attempt to use it as a kind of trump card against the current president. What do you think about that?

[Voyevoda] I have first-hand knowledge of Chechnya's problems. As a State Duma deputy I have worked in the so-called Chechnya commission. It is, of course, very easy to speculate about the situation in Chechnya and to criticize B.N. Yeltsin for this or that decision. But it is wrong not to mention the fact that the president, as a person of deep democratic convictions, went down the route of holding elections. You see, he could quite easily have used the situation in Chechnya to declare a state of emergency, and there would have been no question of any elections. But Yeltsin deliberately went down the route of holding elections to obtain a vote of confidence from the people and to check his Chechnya policy, plus other questions, against the voters' opinions in the elections.

[Gromak] Yuriy Yevgenyevich, let us leave politics to one side. Tell me what you are working on at present.

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[Voyevoda] Until the very last day of my mandate as a deputy, I worked on those issues and problems that the voters, labor collectives, and organizations put before me. I did not even stop doing this work after I vacated my office at the Duma. I went on doing my work at the same time as being a member of the Armed Forces. At present I am under the command of the Russian Federation Armed Forces Main Military Prosecutor's Office.

I was recently invited to join the all-Russia movement to give public support to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin at the presidential elections and was asked to assist him as a representative at the federal level. Today I am such a representative. I travel around all Russia's regions and meet with representatives of the power structures, law enforcement agencies, and Cossacks.

[Gromak] I know that earlier you did not favor Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. You even opposed him. Then suddenly you did a 180-degree turn....

[Voyevoda] Yes, you are right. The current situation in the country objectively speaking confronted me with the necessity of not just voting at the forthcoming presidential elections for Yeltsin but of explaining people that today, now that we have just begun to beat the crisis, there is no other solution. Figuratively speaking, you should not change horses midstream. I do not like everything about the activities of the public support committee led by Sergey Filatov. I think that certain of our representatives' actions perhaps even alienate the voters from Yeltsin's candidacy as opposed to attracting them to it. I think that it is wrong to launch into an anticommunist campaign, which happens at times in the provinces. Incidentally, electoral staff leader Filatov has regularly emphasized that Yeltsin is not anticommunist. What is more, the president himself is constantly stating that all Russians are his concern, irrespective of their political beliefs. It is actually in the interests of all Russians that the president is carrying out the reforms. This is what sets Boris Nikolayevich apart from the other candidates.

[Gromak] Much in the election campaign will depend on wage payments being sorted out and laws being effectively applied. For example, the confrontation between the military and railroad officials in connection with the Law "On the Status of Servicemen" not being applied, has a very great influence on how servicemen feel here in Kaliningrad Oblast....

[Voyevoda] Indeed, funding for the Armed Forces is in such a state today that the Defense Ministry is not in a position to provide financial support for the provisions of laws whose aim is to guarantee servicemen's rights. In the case in question, it is absolutely natural for the railroad officials to demand money in accordance with the law. But I have never justified, nor do I justify now, arbitrary actions by officials who are attempting to oppress servicemen by "removing" whole articles from the law as they see fit. After all, there are many oblasts in Russia where there is no problem with free transport for servicemen.

The payment of servicemen's pay is also under strict control. One of the main tasks Filatov set me before my trip to the oblast was to study this question on the spot, to see how firm the relevant leaders are in the struggle to combat wage delays, and how objective their reports to their superiors are.

[Gromak] What is your forecast for the elections?

[Voyevoda] The most important thing is for as many people as possible to turn out and vote. And for them to make their choice not under the influence of their emotions but consciously, with the future of the country and their own futures at heart. As far as I am concerned personally, I am sure that Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin will win.

Russia: Press Publicity Material for Yeltsin Described

MM2405104596

[FBIS Report] Preelection publicity material on behalf of presidential candidate Boris Yeltsin in the Russian press monitored by MMU for 21-24 May follows the pattern established in the previous week (see first referent item) with some newspapers running the items among or adjacent to advertisements for goods or services, while others carry the item away from any advertising and set among news items or features.

The same two transcripts of messages received via the "Trust the President" hot line from Vera Sergeyevna Kirillova (second referent item) and Aleksandra Matveyevna Chelyushkina (third referent item) explaining why it is necessary to vote for Yeltsin are again being rerun, with no new messages of this kind being carried.

As last week the items have not been run by the army's paper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, the government newspaper ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI, the pro-Communist PRAVDA, the Communist/nationalist SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, nor by the weekly PRAVDA ROSSII.

IZVESTIYA carried such items each day (21-24 May): Chelyushkina's message was carried on 21 May page 4 which was wholly devoted to advertisements, and again on 23 May with a small group of advertisements at the bottom of page 3 (foreign news); Kirillova's message

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was run on the home news page (p 2) on 22 May and again on 24 May at the top of a broad column of advertisements covering half of page 6.

TRUD carried Chelyushkina's message at the top of a half page of advertisements on page 3 on 21 May and again in its weekend tabloid TRUD-7 issue on 24 May on page 15 (the slightly enlarged 10"x7" format occupies the top half of the page, headed "publicity", the bottom half of the page being devoted to an advertisement for VIST computers). The Kirillova message was run on page 4 of the issue for 22 May.

SELSKAYA ZHIZN ran the Chelyushkina message on page 2 on 21 May at the bottom of the page otherwise totally devoted to domestic news and not accompanied by any other advertisements.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA carried the Chelyushkina message on the back page just above the newspapers address and publication data on 21 May and ran the Kirillova message on the "topical themes" page (page 26 of the weekend tabloid issue) on 24 May.

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA ran Chelyushkina on page 3 on 21 May unaccompanied by any other advertising.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA ran Chelyushkina on page 6 on 21 May above a column of advertisements which were headed "KP publicity." Kirillova's message was run on two successive days by KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, on 23 and 24 May (over a column of advertisements headed KP publicity on page 4 on 23 May, and at the foot of the "Political enlightenment" page (page 5) on 24 May.

None of the Russian newspapers monitored by MMU were seen to carry any other overt advertising or quasi-advertisements either for Yeltsin or any other candidates except as described above.

Russia: Shumeyko Urges Candidates To Withdraw in Favor of Yeltsin

LD2305133196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1226 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — The leader of the Reforms—New Course movement, Vladimir Shumeyko, called on six contenders to withdraw their bids for the presidency in favor of current President Boris Yeltsin, a source close to Shumeyko told Interfax Thursday [23 May].

Shumeyko sent letters to eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov, retired general Aleksandr Lebed, ex-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Yabloko party leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, and businessmen Martin Shakkum and Vladimir Bryntsalov, "the people who may be classified as reformists," the source said. "This address was chiefly dictated by Shumeyko's sense of responsibility for what is happening in Russia," the source added.

Prior to this, Shumeyko had repeatedly stated that the Communists must be barred from the power. Each of the six contenders has a small chance of winning the elections, but "millions of voters stand behind them," he said. If they give up, this may "dramatically change the election situation in favor of Yeltsin," he said.

So far, only Gorbachev has answered Shumeyko, saying in an open letter that he did not see "any possibility and expediency in political compromise and support of Yeltsin." On the contrary, "the democratic forces in society must defeat the current regime in free, honest and democratic elections," Gorbachev said.

Yeltsin's political course has resulted in "grave social consequences," Gorbachev said. "The overwhelming majority of Russian voters cannot accept Yeltsin's claims to continue his powers as president," he said. "Nor do the Russians wish to return to the past and support Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov in the elections."

Russia: Yeltsin, Lebed TV Election Broadcasts Viewed

MM2305134596 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 23 May 96 p 2

[I.P. report under the "Candidates Cannot Unsay What They Have Said" rubric: "Dear, Precious, Beloved, One and Only; Lebed the Publicist"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Boris Yeltsin: Dear, Precious, Beloved, One and Only

Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, whose preelection address within the framework of the free airtime arrangements was to have been given 21 May according to the schedule, did not himself appear on screen. And, evidently he is not going to. The incumbent president and the presidential candidate prefers a different kind of agitation. Instead of him, the protagonists of a television publicity serial speak for him and about him and each little episode of the serial is signed off with the president's own autograph: "I trust. I love. I hope. B. N. Yeltsin.

People of the most diverse social strata, professions, and ages demonstrate in an unobtrusive form the multiformity of Yeltsin's electorate: There you have an old village woman in a shawl and a former Olympic champion turned businessman, an elderly aunty from the republic's home guard directorate, and the actress Klara

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Novikova. They are all shown against a background of black and white family photographs ("how much we have lived through — how much we have endured") and they recall their journey through life and state categorically that they do not want to return to the past. "And for that reason I personally will be voting for Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin]."

The gallery of portraits of our compatriots who have already made their choice is replenished virtually daily and is shown both during the free airtime and between films and broadcasts on all the main channels, creating an emotional mood which is designed to convince those people who have still not made up their minds to join the big family in which no one is unwelcome to sit down at table. And the Father of the family — stern but just — is invisibly present at the head of the table.

The advertising slogan of the serial — "I believe, I love, I hope" — for some reason conjures up an association with the title of the film "Dear, Precious, Beloved, One and Only." However, Yeltsin's image-makers have renounced crude flattery as a form of preelection agitation. It is as if all the peoples engaged in the agitation work bear these tender words in mind. The authenticity of the feelings and selflessness of the thoughts are emphasized by the unscripted sound-track and the work-coarsened hands resting on the speaker's knees.

The whole point at issue is the equality of opportunities of all the candidates — the most important principle of genuinely democratic elections. It is said that any president of any country is in the more advantageous position. However, in the experience of U.S. presidential campaigns there is an instance where, during the election campaign in which President Reagan participated, one of the television companies showed an old film in which Reagan the actor appeared. His rival immediately demanded that he be given just as much airtime. And he was granted it. We, of course, do not have the same situation as America, but the excessiveness which has begun to appear could, as the finishing line approaches, produce an effect opposite to the one first conceived. Indeed, the stress on cordial intimacy should not be abused for sooner or later it will spill over into maudlin sentimentality.

Aleksandr Lebed — Lebed the Publicist

Aleksandr Lebed is so far the only one of the presidential candidates who has succeeded with his performance in such a thankless genre as the monologue in front of the television camera. For some reason it seems to me that he wrote his address himself: the terse rough-hewn sentences, and crude and meaty similes which are so typical of him, and which would do credit to any professional publicist.

Lebed's preelection address was also a talented piece of sociopolitical journalism, which, for ease of assimilation, had been divided into paragraphs with short, pithy headings: "What are we doing?"; " We can't go on like this..."; "I have the will to take the first step."

The image of a coarse martinet which used to be cultivated by Aleksandr Ivanovich [Lebed] has been replaced with the more attractive image of a thoroughly reliable guy ("I like men whose features indicate toughness. I feel totally protected when I am at my husband's side," the charming Inna Lebed joked chirpily on [the TV program] "Itogi," and willy-nilly provoked in the female part of the electorate a desire to snuggle up to that side).

It would be possible to quote literally everything from the introduction which was embellished by irony and self-mockery which is rare in presidential candidates:

"Hello dear voters. The spring presidential race has begun — the season when we go hunting for you."

What is also attractive is the fact that, of those who have so far appeared on the screen, he was the first to say:

"I don't intent to promise anything to anyone; I won't be playing those sorts of games. Long ago I made it perfectly clear that there is no such thing as a free lunch."

And this is how Aleksandr Lebed vividly depicts the current situation:

"Instead of the law we have criminals who are a law unto themselves and moreover not in the classical sense but, so to speak in the official sense — namely, his excellency, the civil servant. If we are to use polite language we have capitalism a la nomenklatura, but put simply this is out and out chaos, a real disorderly house. This disorderly house is the kind of specialized, strictly regulated establishment which benefits those who are on top, allowing an honest share-out to be made: the bun goes to the civil servants and the air holes in the bun go to the people.... We can't go on like that."

In general everything expounded above is well known even without Aleksandr Lebed saying so. It is his talent that seduces, the intonation that wins you over, and the deep vocal overtones that hypnotize you. The olive drab jacket and necktie are also a nice touch which provide a reminder of the times when General Lebed used to wear military uniform of similar color.

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Russia: Yavlinskiy Tells Yeltsin To Form Coalition To Block Communists

LD2305190296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1634 GMT 23 May 96

[By Mikhail Alandarenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Itar-Tass) — Presidential candidate Grigory Yavlinskiy, leader of the Yabloko State Duma faction, is stepping up pressure on President Boris Yeltsin in an attempt to coax him into setting up a coalition government.

It is essential to form such a government because of a possible Communist revenge, much feared by both Yeltsin and the democratic opposition, Yavlinskiy's press service said in a statement on Thursday.

"Taking into consideration the threat of unconstitutional developments and a Communist comeback, Yavlinskiy suggested to Yeltsin the idea of a two-party government to be formed by the Kremlin and Yabloko on a parity basis," the statement said.

"Yavlinskiy's address to Yeltsin did not contain a single point under which all those who call themselves democrats would refuse to put their signatures," the statement said.

"If Yeltsin cares about the attitude of the democratic forces towards him, the most notorious figures of his inner circle, including (Defence Minister Pavel) Grachev, (Prime Minister Viktor) Chernomyrdin, (First Vice-Prime Minister Oleg) Soskovets, (chief of presidential staff Nikolay) Yegorov, should be dismissed by May 25," Yavlinskiy's press service said.

According to VtsIOM independent research centre, Yeltsin and Communist candidate Gennadiy Zyuganov are running about neck-and-neck. However, Yavlinskiy believes that the president's potential is exhausted.

"One month before the presidential elections, the Kremlin should look the truth into the eyes," the statement said stressing that the current leaders have promised an end to the Chechen war, a payout of back wages, a renovated union of republics, and restoration of deposits.

"All that could have been promised has already been promised," it said.

"Yeltsin has exhausted his electorate," it said. "Even Kremlin experts are skeptical of Yeltsin's chances to victory compared to those of the Communist leader," the statement stressed.

"Yeltsin should either dismiss his escort, or stop calling himself a democrat. Hence his men's wavering and floundering around in search of a way out, spreading inventions that Yeltsin has allegedly offered the position of vice prime minister to Yavlinskiy," according to the statement.

"The ball is in Yeltsin's court now," the statement said urging the president to take more drastic measures to share power with Yabloko and keep the Communists out.

Russia: Yavlinskiy: Talks With Yeltsin Halted Until Second Round

LD2405105496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1012 GMT 24 May 96

[By Viktor Troyanovskiy]

[FBIS Translated Text] Novgorod, 24 May (Itar-Tass) — Talks between presidential candidate Grigoriy Yavlinskiy and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in connection with the forthcoming elections have been halted until the second round of the voting. The leader of the Yabloko movement said this today, talking to journalists in Novgorod where he has been holding meetings with voters. At the same time Yavlinskiy did not rule out that these talks could be continued.

Responding to a question asked by an ITAR-TASS correspondent as to whom his supporters would be voting for if Boris Yeltsin and Gennadiy Zyuganov get through to the second round, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy said that "the voters would make this decision between the rounds after such a situation has arisen."

"However today we feel that we are going to win," the Yabloko leader stressed. "The task has been set of winning the first round and, after that, the second one as well."

Russia: Yeltsin-Yavlinskiy Options Assessed

964F2234A Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 May 96 p 1

[Article by NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA Editor in Chief Vitaliy Tretyakov: "What Is Happening? (12): Yeltsin-Yavlinskiy: A Long Way To Denouement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is rather amusing to read how new Moscow political intrigues (I use this word in the purely technical sense, without any negative coloration) are perceived by those who publicly comment on the course of the election campaign these days. One finds plenty of everything there—the finest, to the point of dissipation, sarcasm; caustic needles being stuck into the soft tissue of disfavored candidates; and slogans of clan confrontation being passed for advocacy of, alternately, democracy and the people. What is in short supply is calm and objective analysis produced by authors who stand on their feet instead of their heads. Because the

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latter position assumes precisely what we usually get: the camouflaged "I want X to win" openly shown out to the audiences as "This is what we need to do." The normal position permits a different line of reasoning, in the style, I would say, of realistic fatalism: X can only behave this way, and Y—that way; hence, on 16 June we will inevitably have the following.

The Yeltsin-Yavlinskiy relationship has today become the main subject of tea leaf readings among both those who make the tea and those who drink it. But in reality it is all very simple.

First. Yeltsin wants to: 1) remain president 2) by winning the elections.

Second. He knows that this is problematic, to put it mildly.

Third. These days he links one of the options for his success with the creation of a Yeltsin-Yavlinskiy union.

Fourth. From Yavlinskiy's standpoint, such a union is only possible on the condition that he is appointed prime minister before the elections or guaranteed such an appointment after the elections.

Fifth. Alas, there are enough contenders for this spot even without Grigoriy Alekseyevich. It is not clear how they will contribute to Boris Yeltsin's victory, but they talk convincingly. Unlike Odysseus, the president cannot plug his ears with wax to avoid listening to the sweet sounds of pant-clad sirens. A president has to keep his ears open.

Sixth. The proposal, gently floated by the president, to make Grigoriy Alekseyevich "economic chief of the CIS" did not impress Yavlinskiy at all, which, naturally, only reaffirmed the seriousness of intentions on both sides.

Seventh. Under pressure from external forces and using his customary tactics, Boris Yeltsin decided to immediately extract the utility he seeks from the very first contact, while leaving himself free to the maximum extent.

At this point Yavlinskiy was compelled to launch a counterattack.

First. He refuted the president's version that the union is an accomplished fact.

Second. Yavlinskiy, naturally, does not wish to commit political suicide and walk across a mine field, at the end of which (but only at the end) is a door painted on canvas which says: "head of government."

Third. Since Yavlinskiy already has been approached once, he will be approached again. The main point is to remain patient, tenacious, and unbending: a union in exchange for public and official guarantees.

Fourth. Yavlinskiy is playing almost a no-lose game because the year 2000 is a real, not mythical, date for him.

Fifth. Yavlinskiy will now be more careful. While a week ago he could demand guarantees, now he will demand ironclad guarantees.

Sixth. In general, Yavlinskiy can: 1) go with the flow: Even if he comes in third on 16 June, it will be a tremendous personal leap for him—and this is not at all unrealistic; 2) he can create an extravagant electoral coalition, justifying it by the current authorities' inflexibility and habit of not fulfilling their obligations, whose position (and this is now clear to everyone, even themselves) is much worse than is being proclaimed. For instance, he can say: You have pushed me into the Communists' embrace by not wishing to give up a little to gain a lot—so now you have it. I will, on my own, meet Zyuganov halfway, since his inevitable ascension to power no longer can be prevented, but the negative outcome of this victory can be minimized by tying his hands with my terms. If we cannot reign in the radical right policy from the left, we will have to reign in the radical left from the right. And you all will simply disappear as political figures. I will be the one to lead the next party, but this time without looking for your unreliable rear support.

Russia: Yavlinskiy's Professional Career Detailed

964F2234B Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 May 96 pp 1-2

[Article by Tatyana Koshkareva and Rustam Narzikulov, under the "Personnel" rubric: "Candidate for President Is Advised To Become Candidate for Prime Minister: Grigoriy Yavlinskiy Claimed That Job Five Years Ago"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister in Russia is always more than a prime minister somewhere else. He is a rather precise indicator of the president's economic policy and the president's orientation. Recall that in the brief post-Soviet history of our country, the appointments of first Yegor Gaydar and then Viktor Chernomyrdin were preceded by the president's decision to choose, or change, the corresponding economic course.

In this connection the frequently contradictory statements in the mass media regarding a "unification of the presidential campaigns" of Boris Yeltsin and Grigoriy Yavlinskiy are understandably of interest.

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While Yavlinskiy is considered a veteran of Russian politics, his future economic actions are absolutely unclear. The last serious program document was written by his team almost six years ago (the 500 Days program). Since then, Yabloko has limited itself predominantly to criticism of the government in its different compositions, and the bloc's own proposals boil down to very simple and therefore populist exhortations such as "raise inflation."

The well-known Nizhniy Novgorod Prologue program (summer 1992) can hardly be counted as an economic document. This program pursued first and foremost social goals: "creating a middle class," "adapting to the environment of hyper-inflation," and so on.

Meanwhile, the circumstances of Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's swift political career, little known until now, indicate that as prime minister he will be unlikely to settle for the gray and unobtrusive role of a conduit of others' ideas.

Unlike other members of the "laboratory chiefs" cohort (Chernomyrdin's expression), Yavlinskiy initially was deprived of the advantages of belonging to the Soviet-party establishment. He is neither a famous writer's grandson nor the son of a high-ranking State Committee for Science and Technology bureaucrat, and therefore was in no danger of ending up in a prestigious systems analysis institute in Vienna or at KOMMUNIST magazine, or even in a lower-rank Moscow institution.

Nevertheless, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, while still a modest research associate at the NII [scientific research institute] of Labor, in 1988 "organized" his own appointment to the position of department chief at the USSR Goskomtrud [State Committee for Labor and Social Problems]. According to eyewitness testimony, a certain important person from the committee visited its subordinate institute and was amazed by the curiosity and knowledge of a young economist, who showed no signs of the prescribed timidity in front of the big brass. Yavlinskiy was soon invited to come and work for Goskomtrud. Although a department chief is not yet a party nomenklatura, appointments to this position did require CPSU Central Committee approval.

It was then that Yavlinskiy's administrative talents and clearly prominent career ambitions fully revealed themselves. Most far-from-prosperous "laboratory chiefs" at the time would have treated a move to a separate office in the building on Kuybyshev Square, a personal secretary, and access to state committee's special food shop as a gift of fortune and the ultimate career dream. The future politician, however, did not settle for the attributes of the managerial position. It appears that it was in this new status that he displayed for the first time true career aggressiveness, which, unlike that of other "laboratory chiefs," continues to help him stay afloat politically. From this standpoint, probably only Anatoliy Chubays is his equal. These two politicians from science also have in common initially disadvantageous starting positions compared to their other colleagues. On the other hand, most likely it was precisely this factor that ensured their greater tenacity.

At the USSR Goskomtrud, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy displayed considerable zeal. In particular, the methodology for calculating the minimum consumer budget, which became the foundation for determining the subsistence minimum, was developed for the first time under his supervision. With minor modifications, this methodology is used in official calculations to this day. At the time Yavlinskiy also demonstrated the ability to "put together" a team—a large group of young scientists was invited to join the committee's staff, which at the time was a violation of Soviet bureaucratic canons.

The future politician, however, had no desire to spend the rest of his life punching a calculator and counting how many suits, pairs of footwear, and sateen underpants a working man is supposed to consume each year. Thanks to the committee's (as any other all-Union agency, for that matter) close working contacts with the CPSU Central Committee, he was noticed and soon given the opportunity to produce analytical output for the country's chief power institution.

Next came the 500 Days program, and on completing work on this document (in the fall of 1990) Yavlinskiy was appointed deputy chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, from which he resigned several months later. The voluntary resignation from this nomenklatura job was a very unusual occurrence and the first demonstration of rejection of the political benefits of the present for the sake of political benefits in the future.

Before completely becoming a professional oppositionist, Yavlinskiy once again flashed through the corridors of executive power in the fall of 1991. Soon after the August putsch, at Gorbachev's instruction, he worked for several months on the draft economic union treaty among the scattered Union republics. He has devoted all the years that have passed since the disintegration of the USSR (and achieved considerable success) to the creation of his own party—Yabloko, formed on the basis of the EPIcenter [Center for Economic and Political Research] research organization.

If Yavlinskiy does trade in his 10 percent electorate for the job of prime minister, Russia probably will get far from the worst head of government. In addition to quite normal career ambitions, he possesses not only a sufficient track record in economic knowledge but also

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certain political and administrative experience. With respect to the skill of "managing large systems" (Yuriy Luzhkov's expression), he undoubtedly is not Viktor Chernomyrdin's equal; nevertheless, the story of his eight years of growing into the bureaucratic apparat serves as a decent indicator of his competitiveness as a high-ranking bureaucrat. In the fall of 1991 members of the task force (among whom was one of the authors of this article) on preparation of the Economic Union Treaty, were shocked by Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's phrase, when he suddenly got up in the middle of a meeting and with the words "Well, I am out to run the national economy" left the room. Some of those present at the time perceived this phrase as the inappropriate bragging of an apparatchik who had finally got to a position of power. The past five years, during which Yavlinskiy demonstrated model political patience and refused to become a "mere minister," demonstrate that he does want, at minimum, to "run the national economy."

Russia: Zyuganov Visits 'Red' Bryansk Oblast, Gets Cool Reception

MK2305135896 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 23 May 96 p 3

[Report by Andrey Grishkovets and Sergey Zhikharev: "In the Forests of Bryansk They Don't Like Belovezhskaya Forest"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Presidential candidate Gennadiy Zyuganov returned to Moscow yesterday from a one-day campaign trip to Bryansk Oblast. The brief visit to the "Red" oblast, together with woman-cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya, was spearheaded by a rock-solid electorate — those hit by Chernobyl — among whom Zyuganov found support. No members of the oblast administration met with the Communist presidential candidate.

Judging from what State Duma Deputy Shandybin (member of the Communist faction) said, there was no special need for Zyuganov to visit Bryansk, because "they will vote for him anyway" over there. This confidence obviously rests on the results of the December elections for the Duma. The CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] leader thought otherwise. According to the March and April polls, Zyuganov was far ahead of the field, but the situation in May, according to the head of the statistics committee of the oblast administration, Raisa Martynova, began to change; Boris Yeltsin's popularity rose.

No crowd of Communist Party supporters was out at the railway station because the train arrived at about 0600, too early in the morning. After a brief stopover at the hotel "Chernigov," Gennadiy Andreyevich [Zyuganov] set off to lay flowers at the Lenin monument. The ribbon said "To V.I. Lenin from G.A. Zyuganov." Having taped an address for local television, the CPRF leader left for Novozybkov, the town hit worst in the Chernobyl disaster. Even today the level of radiation there is about 20 Curie units per square meter. Living is extremely poor for the people of Novozybkov, and it was easy to persuade them that a change of government would improve their position; Zyuganov was given a warm welcome. Having handed out pictures of himself, the candidate set off for Klintsy, a little spot on the border with Ukraine and Belarus. The gathering held there was described by its organizers as a meeting of friendship between Slavic peoples. The delegates of the other Slavic peoples were a member of the Ukrainian Rada and a Belarusian forestry scientist. Those gathered lamented the collapse of the USSR. The Belarusian forestry expert stated: "As a forestry expert I am bitter because the Belovezhskaya agreement was concluded in a forest." On his way back to Bryansk, the CPRF leader stopped over in the village of Krasnyy Rog, which used to be Count Aleksey Tolstoy's ancestral estate. Zyuganov, however, did not walk up to the estate, but he listened to part of a patriotic speech given by the local keeper of the Tolstoy memorial, Mikhail Trushkin — who was sloshed. He also listened to a girls choir, which sang a song about Russia.

Behind these events, but left unnoticed, were the actions of oblast governor Vladimir Barabanov. He was, until recently, thought to have been in sympathy with the CPRF. Barabanov was in Moscow at the time of Zyuganov's visit. Barabanov's consultant, Vladimir Melnikov, believes that had the governor been in town, he would not have met with the Communist leader all the same.

Russia: CPRF Says Zyuganov To Win, But Yeltsin To Be Declared Winner

MM2405103196 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 24 May 96 p 1

[Report by Lyubov Tsukanova: "CPRF Preparing Public Opinion in Event It Loses"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The leaders of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] — evidently concerned about the relative decline in the standing of their candidate and the growing activeness of President Boris Yeltsin — have taken a logical step for their propaganda style: They have announced that Zyuganov will, of course, win the election, but that Yeltsin will, naturally, be declared the winner. He allegedly has the Central Electoral Commission in his pocket, and the outcome of the election is predetermined.

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You will understand that this is an infallible method — you voice your suspicions, and your opponents have to spend a long and difficult time justifying themselves. Say publicly that you "do not believe" Central Electoral Commission Chairman Ryabov, and Nikolay Timofeyevich will be faced with the rather stupid necessity — from the standpoint of common sense — of proving that he is not "Yeltsin's man."

Yeltsin, for his part, will not be justifying himself, of course — it would not look good. But what is interesting is that both Ryabov's explanations and Yeltsin's silence can once again be used to propaganda advantage by the same party functionaries. If he justifies himself, it means he is guilty. If he keeps quiet, it means he is even more guilty.

But why, indeed, this panic and these suspicions? Is it only because the State Duma was unable to overcome the Federation Council veto on the law "On Public Monitoring of the Holding of Elections and Openness and Glasnost in Summing Up Voting Results"? Specialists claim that more than adequate guarantees for honest elections have been laid down in existing electoral legislation. And it is not just "Yeltsin's men" saying so, but very respectable international observers and election specialists. Only we should not be lazy and we must utilize the potential of laws which have already been passed.

As for the arguments that electoral commissions are scared and are ready to falsify results, there are two views on this. First, these same commissions could have made the results of the Duma elections more advantageous for Yeltsin. Why did they not do so? And, second, Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov recently publicly stated that the CPRF has "its own people" on most (admittedly, not all) of the commissions, and we will learn the whole truth from them. So maybe it is time for the current president to start worrying about how "Zyuganov's people" on precinct commissions plan to count the votes.

Russia: Electoral Commission Opposes Changes in Legislation

LD2305185496 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia's Central Electoral Commission categorically opposes attempts to change the election legislation currently in force on the eve of the presidential elections. Aleksandr Ivanchenko, deputy chairman of the Central Electoral Commission, stated this when commenting on the State Duma's attempt to pass a law on public monitoring of the elections. Ivanchenko noted that the current legislation is adequate for holding democratic elections in Russia and stressed that the Central Electoral Commission supports the Federation Council's refusal to ratify the law.

I will remind you that on 22 May, once again the deputies of the lower chamber could not overcome the senators' veto on this draft bill.

Russia: Electoral Commission Accuses Communists of Disinformation

LD2305190396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1359 GMT 23 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Belskiy]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 23 May (ITAR-TASS) — Nikolay Ryabov, chairman of the Russian Central Electoral Commission, today described the statement, made yesterday by Viktor Ilyukhin, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and chairman of the Duma Committee for Security, as "uncivilized and blatant pressure" on electoral commissions. Nikolay Ryabov said that no other contender, including the authorities, takes such liberties.

The groundless attacks call into question the objectivity and adherence to principles of members of electoral commissions at all levels. Top officials and the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation himself excel in this, he said. With the persistence worthy of a better cause they propagate a dubious idea that their candidate is undoubtedly supported by the majority of the population. In case he fails, they intend to place responsibility for this on the whole system of electoral commissions, which are supposedly thinking of rigging the election results.

The chairman of the Central Electoral Commission noted that these political forces propose louder and louder to create an alternative system for determining results of the voting. Nikolay Ryabov assured journalists that Central Electoral Commissions will work in strict accordance with the electoral legislation in force. Having described in extremely negative terms the law on the public monitoring of the presidential elections, Nikolay Ryabov noted that members of the commissions will send away overzealous "inspectors" because such monitoring can simply disrupt the work of the commissions, he said.

"The Central Electoral Commission is not going to take any sanctions against candidate Zyuganov, unless there are sufficient grounds for it," Ryabov said.

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Russia: Election Bank Funds of Presidential Candidates Cited

LD2305191396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1652 GMT 23 May 96

[By Igor Belskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Itar-Tass) — Slightly more than 18 billion roubles had been deposited in the bank accounts of Russia's 11 presidential candidates by May 15, the day on which they started intensive campaigning on television and radio, according to sources in the Sberbank (Savings Bank) of the Russian Federation cited by the Central Electoral Commission of Russia.

The Central Electoral Commission said no banking accounts had yet been opened for two of the candidates — Yuriy Vlasov and Aman Tuleyev.

Under the law on elections, special accounts are opened for each of the candidates by decision of the Central Electoral Commission to form their campaigning funds and 150 million roubles are emitted on each account from the federal budget to start the ball rolling.

The law envisions that the contestants of the presidency are entitled to use in their election campaigns only the money accumulated on these special accounts. A presidential candidate may spend no more than 14.43 billion roubles throughout the campaign.

As of May 15, more than 7.1 billion roubles, including 6.19 billion donated by legal entities, had been deposited in Boris Yeltsin's account. Of these, 280 million roubles were contributed by the action group which nominated him for a second term in office.

Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's account has more than 3.62 billion roubles on it, with 3.47 billion donated by legal entities.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy on May 15 had a campaign fund of 3.272 billion roubles, of which 57 million roubles were his own money.

Gennadiy Zyuganov on May 15 had at his disposal 2.99 billion roubles with more than 2.1 billion coming from legal entities.

Zyuganov is in the lead in campaign spending, Sberbank reported. He had spent more than 1.65 billion roubles from his campaign fund by May 15, including 374 million for campaigning in the media and more than 1.23 billion roubles to pay for the publication and distribution of leaflets, posters and other campaign products.

The Boris Yeltsin campaign fund had disbursed 300 million roubles for campaigning in the media by May 15, according to Sberbank.

Martin Shakkum had spent by the same date more than 278 million roubles.

Interestingly, billionaire Vladimir Bryntsalov had spent none of his 150,010,000-rouble campaign fund as of May 15.

Russia: Russian Polling Stations Allowed on Estonian Territory

LD2305181396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1316 GMT 23 May 96

[By Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Itar-Tass) — The Estonian Foreign Ministry has addressed a note to the Russian Embassy in Tallinn, notifying it that the Estonian authorities had issued a permission to open polling stations for Russian citizens wishing to take part in the Russian presidential elections on June 16. They are to function within the building of the Russian Embassy in Tallinn and the Consulate-General in Narva, as well as at the Office of the Consular Department in Tartu.

As to Moscow's request to open additional polling stations, the Estonian authorities retorted by asking the Russian side to submit exact lists of Russian citizens currently residing in Estonia. Moscow regards this demand as unacceptable.

A trustworthy official of the Russian Foreign Ministry told Itar-Tass today that the latter had repeatedly asked the Estonian side for additional polling stations due to the large number of Russian citizens now residing in the republic. The Ministry had addressed to it a similar request in light of the June 16 presidential elections. "However, Tallinn continues to adduce conditions, which are unacceptable for the Russian side," the source noted. "The need to submit an exact list of citizens, mentioned in the note of the Estonian Foreign Ministry, is not stipulated by any international conventions or bilateral agreements", he added.

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Russia: St. Petersburg Press Election Coverage Reviewed

MM2305165396 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI (Political Wednesday section) in Russian 22 May 96 p iii

[Report by Nikita Vaynonen under the "Fourth Estate" rubric: "Crisis Time at CHAS PIK"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When Anatoliy Yezhelyev and his colleagues were still only conceiving the idea of the St. Petersburg (at that time still Leningrad) newspaper CHAS PIK, it was already possible to say that it would be a serious democratic publication. I remember the battles the young editorial team had to fight against the censorship department and the party nomenklatura during the last years and months of Soviet rule. Different times then arrived. Our press had new problems. But for all the difficulty and even drama, they cannot be compared to the former and gone-for-ever (let us hope!) ideological vice. How short our memory is! The oh-so-recent past is all-too-quickly forgotten. The northern capital's democratic press — NEVSKOYE VREMYA, VECHERNIY PETERBURG, SANKT-PETERBURGSKIYE VEDOMOSTI, the new SMENA...— has shown vigorous growth. However, the title of the trailblazing publication has proved accurate: CHAS PIK [crisis time] is again on the brink. The hard-won achievements are again under threat. And what are our St. Petersburg counterparts like? Petersburg, like Moscow, is not, of course, the whole of Russia, but without at least a passing acquaintance with its press (I say without exaggeration) any picture of the election situation in the country would be incomplete.

"It is absurd to deny the difficulties and deny the people's natural dissatisfaction. But the majority realizes that this regime, for all its lambasting, has given some kind of future...." This line is taken from an article distributed by the Regional Press Agency, which was set up by the Presidential Staff. The article was carried by CHAS PIK. Is it a pro-presidential newspaper? Not at all. You only have to read the long and (for all my disagreement with the author) substantive interview with Yuriy Boldyrev, who first quit Yeltsin and then Yabloko. For him, who was born in Leningrad and ran for mayor in Petersburg, neither Yavlinskiy nor Yeltsin, the figures for whom, "judging by the results of the December elections," his fellow-St. Petersburgers will vote is acceptable. And he argues his case without abuse in a logical and persuasive way. You can argue against him. You can try to make those who have read the interview and been convinced by it change their mind. But could you argue with PRAVDA, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, or ZAVTRA? Or their readers? They hear nothing there, they do not want to listen to anyone except themselves.

"It is clear that Gennadiy Zyuganov is losing out to Yeltsin in the struggle for the regional elite," Aleksey Razorenov claims in NEVSKOYE VREMYA: "The heads of administration are no longer in any hurry to meet with 'future president' Zyuganov. This marks a definite breakthrough in the campaign." A moot point? In my opinion, yes. Weather vanes register only the upper air, while down on the ground the wind often blows in a different direction; and it is hardly sensible to kid yourself here — after all, the always understandable but insidious desire to believe what we want to believe is most often our undoing.... NEVSKOYE VREMYA, however, continues its ostensibly clear-cut propaganda campaign: "It is necessary to support Yeltsin rather than a 'lesser evil,'" "The attempt to repeat the Communist experiment will bury the economy: The 'incubation period' for disintegration is from three months to a year." But it is not the case! NEVSKOYE VREMYA has no ax to grind, no conformism. Andrey Vermishev, a special correspondent on the newspaper, for example, is convinced that Moscow politicians have "no unity, let alone 'mutual understanding' on the Chechen question. When a ship has several people at its helm at the same time the ship is bound to come to the worst possible end..." And again you can argue the point! Not by indulging in abusive or derisive language but by seeking to refute the argument as is customary among well-brought-up people. Which is what SMENA does, albeit not by objecting directly to Vermishev, but readers buying a handful of newspapers at a newsstand (and in St. Petersburg, as in many other large cities, street sales are much more popular than in Moscow) can compare various standpoints. When Sergey Filatov was in St. Petersburg, SMENA correspondent Aleksey Serditov asked him whether there was a contest going on among groups in Yeltsin's entourage. His answer was that "the president has his own view on every question, a lot of argument and effort is required to make him change his mind.... What do you mean by contest — a contest where people use their elbows or a contest of opinions? There has always been the latter and may, god willing, this always be so...."

But even objectivity, if it becomes an end in itself, can mislead and degenerate into bias of the shabbiest kind. For example, Aleksandr Yurkov writes in SANKT-PETERBURGSKIYE VEDOMOSTI that "...anxiety spiced with hatred is on the increase. Whirlwinds of hostility are blowing from both sides. The strong language employed by the left-wing press to savage the president and his 'criminal regime' seems to have no limit. And the abuse leveled against the Com-

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munists by television, radio, and the press is equally excessive..." I think the writer will find it difficult to cite specific examples of "excessive abuse against the Communists" in the democratic press. Hardly anyone is able to compete with the Chikins and Prokhanovs on this score. What is true, however, is that rejecting excess is the first step toward calm in society. The St. Petersburg press sets a good example in this regard.

Russia: Presidential Candidates Hold Back From Buying Airtime

MM2205154696 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 21 May 96 p 3

[Article by Alevtina Polyakova and Dmitriy Babich: "Election Publicity: No Crush Observed on the Air"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The president's campaign is increasingly starting to resemble the "Come on, You Guys!" competition. Or, rather, "Come on, You Candidates!" It could not have been otherwise, since one minute of airtime on ORT costs between $15,000 and $30,000. Advertising at RTR costs $10,000 in the morning and $12,000 in the evening. As a result, so Aleksey Pushkov, leader of the ORT Public Relations Center, reported, no particular crush is to be observed on the air, as distinct from the Duma elections. So far Yavlinskiy has appeared on RTR. Zhirinovskiy and Lebed have lodged applications, but no money has yet been forthcoming. The candidates, who, as you will understand, are not poor people, nevertheless lack the money for paid advertising. One after the other, Fedorov and Vlasov have refused to pay for airtime, while the organizers of Yeltsin's campaign have declared that they will buy time on television only if the president's rating really drops. The LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] is considering an unexpected option — to buy two hours of airtime on the eve of the election and make a strong "finishing spurt." It is not yet known whether Zhirinovskiy will decide on this.

For the time being it is necessary to employ makeshift artifices in order somehow to secure some television exposure. Zyuganov suddenly proclaimed himself a literary genius, accepting the Mikhail Sholokhov Literary Prize from the "Sovremennyy Pisatel" Publishing House for his books "I Believe in Russia" and "Power." Even though some critics maintain that Gennadiy Andreyevich's muse is somewhat heavyweight and is closer to politics than literature, this does not embarrass Vyacheslav Orlov, member of the Sholokhov Prize Commission: Zyuganov, he said, has managed to "capture the spirit" of Sholokhov's creativity. Well, as a result Zyuganov captured two birds at once — both the prize and publicity.

Zhirinovskiy has turned to heavy metal rock musicians rather than writers. He prefers iron and blood to paper and ink. So far only the not unknown Pauk, leader of the "Metal Corrosion" band, has reciprocated. According to Eduard Krylov, the LDPR's young falcon, whom the Russian people know by the nickname of Eddi Eriksson, in the very near future Pauk will set out around the country along with the "Aria" group and his celebrated scantily clad girls — to campaign for Zhirinovskiy. The possibility of the temporary reincarnation of Vladimir Volfovich himself as "one of the young crowd" cannot be ruled out either. He is familiar with this kind of thing from the December elections. So there will be a sharp increase in the amount of metal in the 1996 campaign.

Experts of the "Public Opinion" Foundation reckon, however, that advertising influences only one-fourth of the population. According to Aleksandr Oslon, director of the "Public Opinion" Foundation, all television viewers can be divided into two groups — "couch potatoes," who like placid broadcasts, and "aggressors," who adore scathing criticism and thrillers with gunmen as a special treat. This must be taken into account by all election clip makers. Zhirinovskiy's publicity, for example, is designed for the "aggressors," while Yeltsin's is meant for the "couch potatoes."

Three-fourths of Russians, however, decide everything themselves, without consulting the television screen. Who knows, maybe the remaining one-fourth will prove decisive....

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CIS: Russia's Grachev, Belarus' Maltsaw View Cooperation

WS2405081296 Minsk VO SLAVU RODINY in Russian 21 May 96 p 1

[Report by Lieutenant Colonel Alyaksey Bezvyaselnyy on a news conference by Belarusian Defense Minister Leanid Maltsaw and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev held in Moscow on 14 May: "Servicemen Fulfill People's Will"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **As has been reported, when the joint meeting of the Russian and the Belarusian Defense Ministries Collegiums was over, the defense ministers — Army General Pavel Grachev and Lieutenant General Leanid Maltsaw, respectively — held a news conference. Today we offer our readers a report on this news conference prepared by our special correspondent.**

[Bezvyaselnyy] **What was the primary objective of the joint meeting of members of the Russian and Belarusian Defense Ministries Collegiums in Moscow?**

[Grachev] In December 1995 we held an identical meeting in Minsk, the result of which was the signing of 15 important documents specifying the normative-legal basis of and prospects for the military cooperation between Russia and Belarus.

The primary objective of the current meeting is to take another decisive step toward the expansion of our military cooperation and toward ensuring security for our two countries. Of course, the signing of an agreement on the establishment of the Community of Sovereign Republics [SSR] by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka was something entirely new for Russian-Belarusian relations.

During the joint meeting, Lt. Gen. Leanid Maltsaw and I signed a package of 10 documents that demonstrate the full-scale and long-time nature of our cooperation which befits the relations between both the two fraternal people and their Armed Forces.

[Maltsaw] I would not say that the joint meeting of our collegiums was something like an extraordinary event. I would like to stress with satisfaction that the objective of this regular meeting (there were such meetings before and they will also be held in the future) was Russian-Belarusian military integration.

Fully sharing Army General Pavel Grachev's opinion on our joint work over two days, I would like to emphasize some additional issues.

First The signing of an agreement on the establishment of the SSR provided a legal basis or, if you want, a good impulse for our further military-technical cooperation because we, servicemen, cannot be ahead of our political leaders. As is known, the Russian Duma and the Belarusian Supreme Soviet have recently ratified the 2 April agreement. This event proves that having taken this step, military chiefs began to fulfill not only the will of their presidents, but also the will of our fraternal peoples in general.

[Bezvyaselnyy] **What is the primary essence of the decisions that were collaboratively agreed on?**

[Grachev] The primary document signed by defense ministers was a Protocol on Primary Measures To Implement the Agreement on the Establishment of the SSR. To this end, there are plans to carry out the following measures **in the military-political area:**

1. To draft an agreement on principles of joint ensuring of regional security, a concept for joint defense policy, and a new bilateral agreement on principles of Russian-Belarusian military cooperation before the fourth quarter of 1996;

2. To develop common principles of building the Armed Forces of the two countries.

In the military area:

The practical resolving of issues in the areas of the joint ensuring of regional security, planning, the use of troops, as well as the implementation of measures to provide operational and military training will become of paramount importance.

Second We should specify procedures, conditions, maintenance, and the use of the existing military infrastructure of our countries in order to provide our joint security; we should also develop a relevant normative-legal basis. In the second quarter of 1996, it is necessary to draft proposals to create a single system of military education.

In the military-technical area.

The primary task here is to preserve the existing enterprises of the military-industrial complex located on the territories of the two countries in order to develop new prototypes of military equipment and weapons and accessories, that is, to preserve the entire technical system for the Russian and Belarusian Armed Forces.

[Maltsaw] I only wish to add that since 1 April, Belarusian servicemen, in collaboration with Russian servicemen, have been assuming joint combat duties in the air defense system. Now we have a united air defense system, and there are plans to set up a **common air defense system** in the future. This is not just a play on words. But I wish to stress that we are undertaking all measures to further deepen the integration in the military

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area only within the framework of the Constitution, of the existing legislation of the two states, and of the April agreement.

[Grachev] Similar meetings with military chiefs from some countries (Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and others) and the holding of joint collegiums became one of the priority forms of activities of the Russian Defense Ministry in the development of military bilateral relations, given the simultaneous cooperation within the framework of the CIS collective security treaty.

[Bezvyaselnyy] **Do you regard the further deepening of the integration between Russia and Belarus as a unique counterbalance to the potential eastward expansion of NATO?**

[Grachev] We do not regard the expansion of military cooperation as a counterbalance to the European security. We, servicemen, act only within the framework of the CIS collective security treaty and, recently, within the framework of the agreement on the establishment of the SSR.

[Maltsaw] In this case, we conduct all joint military-technical cooperation not against NATO but to protect the interests of our people. Belarus has a defense doctrine and we do not need any enemy. The stronger our Army is, the more probable that no one would want to test our strength.

Integration processes and military-technical cooperation (for example, between Russia and Belarus) continue independently of the expansion of NATO membership, although we also consider these processes and the entire situation in the world.

[Bezvyaselnyy] **In light of the ever increasing presence of NATO in the countries of the former Eastern bloc, are you planning to establish additional Russian military sites in Belarus or to more intensively use Belarusian military sites?**

[Grachev] We view this process as follows: Yes, indeed, we are watching the process of NATO potential eastward expansion with great attention. As you know, Russia opposes this process with great determination. Because we are servicemen, we will undertake certain identical measures, if NATO leaders take practical steps to expand NATO membership, particularly by admitting new members located close to the Russian and, naturally, Belarusian borders.

We are watching attentively the possible accession of Poland and of Lithuania to NATO. It is a very serious military-strategic step, because it will create uncomfortable conditions in our Special Kaliningrad Defense Region. Therefore, we would oppose any barrier — like a NATO member — appearing between Kaliningrad Oblast and the main territory of the Russian Federation. At the same time, the NATO leadership is also trying, in their way, to ensure European security. Therefore, we would take military-strategic steps to prevent the establishment of a buffer zone on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast.

[Bezvyaselnyy] **For a long time, certain Belarusian political forces have been spreading rumors that due to the deepening of our military cooperation with Russia, Belarusian youth will be sent to "hot spots." Is this true?**

[Grachev] I can say that this issue has never been raised and will never emerge. This is purely your domestic issue and it is up to the Belarusian president and the Supreme Soviet to resolve it. Hence, do not worry: General Grachev will not send Belarusian young men to either Chechnya or other "hot spots."

CIS: Azerbaijan May Join Four-State Integration Pact

LD2405110696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1022 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, May 24 (Interfax) — Azerbaijan may soon consider moves to join the agreement for economic and social integration signed by Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States Ivan Korotchenya told Interfax in Baku.

"When it will do so is hard to say, but it is likely to play a role in further efforts for CIS integration," Korotchenya said.

Korotchenya met with Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev Thursday and the Azerbaijani prime minister and parliament speaker Friday.

Baku will see the CIS as an effectively working organizational structure if the Commonwealth is capable of influencing developments around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Korotchenya said. Practically all discussions held in Baku focused on with the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, he also said.

The CIS will play an increasingly big role in efforts to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, Korotchenya said.

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CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 24 May

LD2405061996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0508 GMT 24 May 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW May 24 (Itar-Tass) — Follows a review of Friday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated May 24. The press highlights Russia's forthcoming June 16 presidential elections.

IZVESTIYA carries the answers given by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to questions asked by the newspaper's readers.

The questions deal with matters concerning the Chechnya situation, the fight against corruption and organised crime, reforms in the army, and the repayment of wage and pension arrears.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA on evacuation contingency plans of US embassy in Moscow.

While believing in Yeltsin's win, the US also makes contingency plans in case there would be a different outcome of the elections, the newspaper notes.

Following State Department instructions, the US embassy in Moscow has warned all US citizens, who now live in Russia, that in the event of unrest or the start of a civil war in Russia after June 16, all Americans would be subject to immediate evacuation.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on versions of voters' participation in June 16 polls.

Prominent TV journalist Vladimir Pozner examines versions of voters can participate in the polling process on June 16. He convincingly argues in favour of the need for all citizens to cast their votes consciously.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA on reasons behind Russian Prime Minister's visit to Kiev.

"Viktor Chernomyrdin seeks to remove problems that hinder Boris Yeltsin's trip to Kiev," the newspaper points out. Many an analyst believes that the Premier's visit is accounted for by a desire of Russian leaders to keep Ukrainian Premier Marchuk at his post as a supporter of economic integration with Moscow.

IZVESTIYA on criminal proceedings against officials at the Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations for embezzlement of public funds.

These are stressful days for Oleg Davydov, Russian Minister for Foreign Economic Relations: the General Prosecutor's Office has instituted criminal proceedings against Ministry officials in view of the unlawful spending of State-provided funds amounting to 5,000 million roubles.

The funds have been used for the construction of country cottages, the purchase of apartments, the payment of bonuses, and travel abroad. Top officals of the Ministry are suspected of involvement in the embezzlement of public funds.

IZVESTIYA reports that the US Securitites and Exchange Commission has for the first time applied retaliatory measures to the Sergey Mavrodi-established Russian Investment Foundation. This time he tried to hopdwink ordinary Americans.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on Russia Borderguard Day, which falls due on May 28.

On the eve of the public holiday, the newspaper carries an interview with General of the Army Andrey Nikolayev, Director of the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on the Man of the Week award.

The newspaper has chosen Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov as the Man of the Week. At the "Russian mayor-95" competition on Sunday, Luzhkov was awarded the grand prix.

IZVESTIYA on an AIDS epidemic in Ukraine.

"The current AIDS epidemic in Ukraine is likened to a disaster," the newspaper reports from Kiev. The issue of donor blood for practical medicine uses was banned on May 22. Ukraine is being threatened with a certain indigenous AIDS subtype which is not amenable to diagnosis. Over the past month alone, 1,000 people got infected with the substrain of the AIDS virus.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on the poor condition of libraries and book repositories.

The squalid condition of librarires and book repositories in Russia is the subject of an interview with Academician Dmitriy Likhachev. Prior to the 1917 revolution, the national library system was one of the world's most advanced ones.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA on defence industry development problems.

The development of the defence industry in Nizhny Novgorod Region is the subject of an interview with Region Governor Boris Nemtsov. He favours the privatisation of the defence sector, with the exception of the nuclear power industry.

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Russia: Primakov: Russia Will Work To Normalize U.S.-Cuba Relations

LD2305200896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1651 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature: by diplomatic correspondents Aleksandr Korzun, Igor Porshnev, Yevgeniy Terekhov, and others]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] HAVANA, May 23 (Interfax) — Russia will do its utmost for the normalization of Cuban-U.S. relations although, for the time being, there is no talk of mediation efforts, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told journalists in Havana Wednesday.

"We realize how difficult it is going to be but relations between Havana and Washington must be brought to normal," Primakov said.

Moscow and Washington have carried out neither open nor confidential talks on Primakov's visit to Cuba. "Russia is a sovereign nation which is capable of mapping out its foreign policies on its own," Primakov said.

Primakov lashed out against new U.S. legislation on economic sanctions against Cuba's trade partners.

The level of Russian-Cuban trade and economic relations will depend on the level of overall relations between Moscow and Havana, and Moscow lays emphasis on the promotion of relations with Havana, Primakov stressed.

Primakov and the Cuban leaders signed a declaration on the principles of Russian-Cuban relations and a program for cooperation in the fields of culture and scientific research. Primakov is visiting Havana on instructions from President Yeltsin.

Primakov refused to describe the recent stage in Russian-Cuban relations as critical. "Relations between our countries have never faced crises," Primakov told Interfax, "they have had their ups and downs. And they are about to expand."

The implementation of the Russian-Cuban sugar-oil deal faces certain problems, Primakov said. Under the deal, Russia is to exchange 1.5 million tonnes of oil for 500,000 tonnes of Cuban raw sugar.

The Yeltsin administration would favor the ratification of the second treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons, also known as START-2, Primakov told reporters in Havana, but the treaty will "hardly, if at all," be ratified by the Russian legislature if the United States builds itself a new ABM system. The START-2 agreement has already been ratified by the United States.

Primakov and his British counterpart Malcolm Rifkind are going to meet soon in Berlin. They will discuss bilateral relations in the light of the recent expulsion of four British diplomats from Moscow and the same number of Russian diplomats from London.

Primakov and Rifkind will meet at a session of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council to be held on June 3 to 5, sources close to Primakov said.

The Bosnian contact group, which brings together Russia, the United States, Britain, France and Germany, is due to hold a session in the same city and on the same dates.

Russia: Primakov Departs Cuba; Castro Says Relations on 'Up'

LD2305211896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2048 GMT 23 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Viktor Khrekov and Konstantin Zhukovskiy]

[FBIS Translated Text] Havana, 24 May — Russian Federation Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov completed his official visit to Cuba on Thursday [23 May] and left for Venezuela. Cuban leader Fidel Castro and foreign minister Roberto Robaina bade farewell to the Russian guest at Havana's Jose Marti international airport.

Speaking to journalists, Fidel Castro stressed his satisfaction with the visit and the importance of relations with Moscow. Russian-Cuban relations, he said in response to a question from ITAR-TASS "have had their ups and downs, and their current phase can be regarded as an up." "Comandante" had only the most "warm and friendly words" to say as the aircraft with the "Rossiya" logo flew off.

Fidel Castro said relations with Russia are now being forged on a new basis, and that there was much still to be done in this respect. He described as "very important" Moscow's line during the UN Security Council discussions of the Miami aircraft incident, and also in Geneva when the UN human rights commission voted on the "Cuba resolution." Castro also quoted Yevgeniy Primakov's words at a news conference to the effect that Russia's position toward Cuba is not driven by short-term considerations.

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Russia: Primakov Begins Official Visit to Venezuela

LD2405094496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0837 GMT 24 May 96

[By Viktor Khrekov and Andrei Golubov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CARACAS, May 24 (Itar-Tass) — "The Russo-Venezuelan relations have bright prospects and obvious reserves, which should be efficiently used with benefit for both sides," Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told Itar-Tass upon his arrival here for a 2-day official visit to Venezuela on Thursday [23 May]. The visit to Venezuela rounds off Primakov's first Latin American tour.

Asked by Itar-Tass about the purpose of the visit, Primakov stressed that it was not to conclude concrete deals, which is usually done at another level, but to promote the Russo-Venezuelan dialogue and to give a new impulse to the relations between the two countries.

This is the first ever visit of a Russian foreign minister to this South American country. It is expected to be rounded off by the signing of several bilateral documents, including a treaty on friendship and cooperation and an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation.

"The visit of the Russian foreign minister is important for Venezuela not only because it is the first such visit to our republic, but also because it offers a chance to bring closer our two countries and peoples, whose importance and voice on the international arena are notable and heeded," Milos Alcalay, who is discharging the functions of Venezuelan foreign minister while Minister Miguel Burelli is paying a visit to Brazil, told Itar-Tass here. He said that the signing of the large-scale bilateral documents, scheduled for Friday, would open up new prospects for deepening the Russo-Venezuelan relations in the economic, scientific, technological, and cultural domains.

Russia: Primakov Holds Talks on Venezuelan Petroleum

LD2405103396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1011 GMT 24 May 96

[By Viktor Khrekov and Andrey Golubov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CARACAS, May 24 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, currently paying a 2-day official visit to Venezuela, today met Erwin Arrieta, the Minister for Energy and Mining, and had talks with managers of the Venezuelan petroleum industry. During the meeting, which was held in camera, the Russian Minister was informed in detail about the Venezuelan petroleum industry, which is the core of the country's national economy, and on the latest achievements in this domain, as well as on the broad opportunities for bilateral cooperation between the two countries, including exchanges of technologies and mutual deliveries of petroleum and various oil products.

ITAR-TASS has learned that Arrieta informed Primakov about Venezuela's readiness to resume the tripartite Russo-Venezuelan-Cuban agreement on mutual oil deliveries. This agreement, in keeping with which Russia (former USSR) had delivered oil to the European partners of Venezuela in exchange for Venezuelan deliveries to Cuba on account of Russian commitments to that country, had yielded to the sides involved a profit amounting to several hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars. The agreement remained in force from 1978 to 1990.

Asked by journalists about the prospects for resuming this "tripartite oil accord", Primakov stressed that "experts in Moscow are now working on this problem, proceeding from Russia's interest in continuing mutually profitable deliveries according to this scheme". In the course of his meeting with Arrieta and leaders of the country's oil industry, the Russian Foreign Minister stated that he would return to Moscow as an active advocate of this process's acceleration.

Moreover, ITAR-TASS has learned that the Russian and Venezuelan ministers had an interesting exchange of views on the processes of gradually giving private capital access to the power industry, which are developing in the two countries. The sides were in accord that privatisation in this industry, which is strategically important for any country, should not be excessively rapid and should envisage state control over the major oil and other power companies.

Russia: Wolfensohn: World Bank Has No Plan if Communists Win

LD2305124496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1233 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (FIA-Interfax) — The World Bank does not have a plan of action in the case of the Communists winning the presidential elections, World Bank President James Wolfensohn told a news conference in Moscow Thursday [23 May].

Wolfensohn said his meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin had not touched on the possibility of a Communist election victory. Wolfensohn said he took into account Yeltsin's determination to win and is ready to continue cooperation with his government.

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Wolfensohn said he had met with Russian left-wing oppositionists in Davos, Switzerland. "They spoke as capitalists," he said. At the same time, he said he did not know whether their statements in Davos reflected the economic policy of a would-be Communist government.

The meeting with Yeltsin focused on the social aspects of the World Bank's projects in Russia, Wolfensohn said. In particular, they discussed the need for social guarantees to coalworkers during the reorganization of the Russian coal industry, he said. The World Bank plans to lend Russia $500 million for the project, most of which will be spent on social security, he said.

Russia: U.S. Embassy Seen Planning Possible Evacuation of Citizens

MK2405094796 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 May 96 p 2

[Report by Konstantin Katanyan: "Americans Are Ready for the Worst"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Acting on instructions from its State Department, the American Embassy in Moscow has tipped off all U.S. citizens currently living in Russia about the need to be prepared for the most undesirable consequences of the presidential elections. All Americans are subject to immediate evacuation should there be disturbances in our country after 16 June, or if, God forbid, it comes to civil war.

At the first sounds of shooting in the streets, U.S. citizens ought to gather their papers and whatever cash they have, put on warm clothes and, leaving all the rest behind, immediately set off for the building on Novinskiy Boulevard, which the diplomats from force of habit call Chaykovskiy Street. It is not recommended to use personal automobiles, especially foreign-made ones, and taxi cabs. It is better to use the services of private motorists or public transport.

The embassy guarantees that all these refugees will be accommodated on its territory and taken out of the country in an orderly manner. All of these things were told to your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA observer Wednesday evening by Efroim Sevela, the well-known author and film director, after he addressed Moscow jurists.

In the 1970's, Sevela left our country for Israel. Later he received American citizenship and has been regularly visiting our country since 1988. It was during yet another stay in Moscow that Sevela received the U.S. Embassy's fearsome warning of possible evacuation.

Sevela went down to the embassy to make sure that preparations are really under way there to receive thousands of refugees. "I was permitted to go down into the basement of the embassy building," Sevela said, "where I saw rows of two-tier plank beds and stocks of water and food intended for American citizens awaiting their turn to leave the country."

Many who have heard Sevela's account think the American diplomats' fears quite sound. In the event Gennadiy Zyuganov wins the elections, they think, two undesirable developments are possible. If power goes to the Communists, actions aimed at the nationalization of property might lead to armed clashes; and if Yeltsin refuses to surrender his powers, blood might be shed in attempts to crush by force the resistance of displeased members of the implacable opposition.

Russia: U.S. Efforts at 'Isolating' Iran, Russia's Stance Viewed

NC2405070596 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Persian 1500 GMT 23 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States persistently pursues a policy of isolating Iran on the international political, commercial, and economic scenes. The establishment of a direct unilateral embargo on contacts with Tehran and the U.S. Government's repeated accusations that Iran perpetrates various crimes are all aimed at this objective. Accusing Iran of wanting to acquire the nuclear weapon and of supporting international terrorism and terror in the Middle East in particular are among the most common pretexts and reasons used to call for the isolation of Iran.

Tehran officials obstinately refuse to accept Israel's right to exist and support Lebanese Hizballah and other radical Palestinian groups morally and politically. These things help Washington make such remarks. Thus, it is not surprising that Warren Christopher, the head of American diplomacy, again referred to this to accuse Iran of supporting international terrorism. According to him, there is no longer any doubt that Tehran is involved in terrorist activities against the Middle East peace process. Christopher claimed that Iran encourages armed groups to attack installations in Israel and gives them money. He said that Iran extends several millions of dollars of assistance to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad of Palestine and about $100 million each year to Lebanese Hizballah.

Christopher aimed these accusations at Iran in his speech at Washington's Middle East Policy Institute, which, according to ASSOCIATED PRESS, is a [word indistinct] pro-Israeli institution. Christopher's complaint that America's European allies have ties with Iran formed a major part of his speech. As is common among

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diplomats, he used an extremely cautious tone. But the American secretary of state said that despite the need to make Iran pay heavily for its support of terrorism, European countries still have relations with Iran. Christopher pointed out that the European countries continue to have normal trade relations with Iran.

Washington's dissatisfaction over European countries' refusal to adhere to the anti-Iranian sanctions is understandable. Without the participation of the European countries—Iran's biggest trading partners—these sanctions will be ineffective. Not only the European Union, but many other countries do not support full economic and political isolation of Iran. Russia too opposes it. Moscow believes that methods such as sanctions and the imposition of unilateral penalties solve none of the problems on the international scene.

Russia: Perry Opposition to Missile Sales to PRC Noted

MM2405100996 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 24 May 96 p 3

[Report by ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Borenko: "Washington's Appeal"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 23 May — The United States is "resolutely urging" Russia and Ukraine not to sell missile technology to the PRC, U.S. secretary of Defense William Perry said during a meeting with journalists.

"We have information that China is trying to obtain technology from Russia relating to SS-18 missiles," he noted. "We believe that this would be a tremendous mistake and have correspondingly set out our position to the Russian and Ukrainian Governments." According to him, the United States has also voiced its concern to China.

The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, as the U.S. mass media learned, recently drafted a report indicating that, were it to obtain the technologies for the development of ballistic missile guidance systems, China "would considerably boost its potential to threaten targets on U.S. territory."

Russia: PRC's Alleged Interest in Missile Technology Questioned

MK2305124996 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 23 May 96 p 2

[Report by Yuriy Golotyuk: "The United States Is Worried About China's Interest in Russia's 'Satan.' The Americans Are Scared by the Available Information About a Leak of Missile Technology From Russia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry said in Washington that "there is some information suggesting that China is trying to obtain from Russia technology related to SS-18 missiles." In the opinion of the head of the U.S. military agency, the transfer of such information to China would be a "great mistake" and a violation of the START I treaty. Mr. Perry did not specify what particular technical data are meant. True, the U.S. mass media refers to a report, prepared recently by the Defense Intelligence Agency of the U.S. Department of Defense, which says that should China obtain technologies to manufacture ballistic missile guidance systems, it "would significantly enhance its ability to endanger targets on U.S. territory."

The SS-18 and related technologies, however, are of interest to foreign intelligence services not only because of the guidance systems. This missile, called the R-36 in Russia (SS-18 by U.S. classification, and 'Satan' by NATO) is the mightiest intercontinental complex in service with the Russian Strategic Missile Forces. The missile is able to deliver 10 warheads, 50 kilotons each, at a distance of up to 15,000 kilometers. It is also outfitted with systems that are able to overwhelm an enemy's antimissile defense system.

To all appearances, the U.S. information on China's interest in the missiles is not very reliable, since, in Mr. Perry's words, Washington has notified the governments of both Russia and Ukraine (the missiles are in service in Russia, but were manufactured at Ukrainian factories) of its concern, i.e., the United States does not know for sure via what channels and which country the Chinese are trying to obtain the required documentation. It cannot be ruled out that the Americans' fears are based on rather ambiguous information that, not long ago, in Dnepropetrovsk, at the entrance checkpoint of the Yuzhnyy machine-building plant (which used to manufacture the SS-18), some Chinese citizens were arrested who allegedly tried to purchase classified information.

The Russian Federation Foreign Ministry believes that reports of attempts by China to obtain information on the SS-18 do not correspond to reality. Yesterday, Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov expressed his "astonishment" in connection with Mr. Perry's statement: "As far as I know, Russia is not selling China anything of the kind." Despite this, since the leak of technologies could take place from "nongovernmental" sources, "this needs to be checked on." Yesterday, the Federal Security Service failed either to confirm or

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deny to your SEGODNYA correspondent the fact that Russian counterintelligence was carrying out a "check."

Russia: Chernomyrdin, Ukrainian President Comment on Talks

LD2305200996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1800 GMT 23 May 96

[Video report by Vladimir Luskanov and Valeriy Shabanov; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin visited Kiev today and held talks with the Ukrainian leaders. One of the themes was again the upcoming visit by President Boris Yeltsin to Ukraine, but once again dates were not mentioned. This is already the 11th time that it has been said that the visit is possible. Here is a report from Kiev by Vladimir Luskanov:

[Begin recording] [Luskanov] Prime Minister of Russia Viktor Chernomyrdin arrived in Kiev today on a one-day working visit. Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk met the Russian delegation at the airport.

It was intended that the heads of government would hold an hour- long one-to-one conversation, then they would take part in an expanded meeting of the delegations. However, the hour-long conversation was extended. The members of the delegation spent a long time talking about nothing, although formally they were supposed to discuss in working groups four main themes: settlement of disputes around Sevastopol; compensation for Ukraine for the nuclear weapons withdrawn from its territory; problems of commercial and economic cooperation; and finally disputes around property, diplomatic missions. But that is for the protocol.

Viktor Chernomyrdin came to Kiev for quite a different reason. On the instructions of President of Russia Boris Yeltsin he intends to convince Kiev to make one, but a very important half-way step — namely to recognize that Sevastopol is the main base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Chernomyrdin's argument is a simple one: Ukraine lifts its claims on Sevastopol and Russia will immediately sign an interstate treaty which, incidentally, recognizes Crimea as territory of Ukraine.

After closed talks with his Ukrainian colleague, Viktor Chernomyrdin set off to meet Leonid Kuchma, president of Ukraine. That meeting also took place behind closed doors.

Dmitriy Ryurikov, aide to the president of Russia on international issues, did not hide the fact that should the outcome of today's talks be favorable, Boris Yeltsin might come to Kiev on an official visit before 16 June. Will Viktor Chernomyrdin be able to do all at once what Russia and Ukrainian diplomats were not able to do over four years?

Evidently there are no miracles in politics. After six hours of continuous talks, Viktor Chernomyrdin and Leonid Kuchma had nothing to say to correspondents for the major news conference was canceled. The results of today's meeting were summed up literally on the staircase:

[Correspondent Valeriy Shabanov] Viktor Stepanovich, have you managed to reach any agreement on the Black Sea Fleet?

[Chernomyrdin] I consider that it has been possible. From one meeting to the next we always move the meetings ahead and I think that we have done so here, too.

[Kuchma] The meeting was very constructive. And such meetings are essential, be they connected with a visit or without a visit by the president, that is unequivocal.

[Chernomyrdin] Yes!

[Kuchma] We moved much closer together in our understanding of all the problems that exist. And the most important thing is that we have determined for ourselves that they must be resolved, for nobody will resolve them for us. There is the mutual desire for that.

[Shabanov] Just one thing can be stated today: another opportunity has been missed to achieve a breakthrough in Russian-Ukrainian relations. [end recording]

Russia: Chernomyrdin Pleased With Results of Visit to Ukraine

LD2305173196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1750 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev [no dateline as received] — "I am very happy with the preliminary decisions that we took today," Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told correspondents, commenting on the results of his working visit to Kiev.

He said that during his meeting with the Ukrainian leadership the sides discussed all the issues of bilateral cooperation, in particular the Black Sea Fleet, an agreement on trade and economic cooperation, and creating financial-industrial groups and power engineering.

Chernomyrdin said that the agreement on Russia compensating Ukraine for tactical nuclear weapons is 99.9 percent ready. He confirmed that the sum has been fixed at $450 million.

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He believes that "some results" have been achieved concerning the Black Sea Fleet. "We are making progress from meeting to meeting," he stressed.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma expressed his conviction that such meetings are essential. He said that they "bring about the understanding of the current problems between Russia and Ukraine and that they must be solved."

Chernomyrdin has given to understand that "Yeltsin is not likely to visit Ukraine before the coming elections in Russia." "The president's schedule is very tight and he is approaching the finishing line in the presidential campaign," he clarified.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Meets U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary

LD2305123296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1456 GMT 22 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 22 May — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin today discussed a wide range of matters concerning Russia's cooperation with the International Monetary Fund [IMF] with Lawrence Summers, U.S. deputy Treasury secretary responsible for international affairs, who is on a visit here.

The meeting took place behind closed doors, but ITAR-TASS has learned that the meeting discussed the problem of Russia's obligations to the IMF to pay off extended credit of around $10 billion, the first part of which the IMF paid to Russia this year. Viktor Chernomyrdin also briefed Lawrence Summers about the economic situation in Russia, the course of reforms, the restructuring of economy, and social policy.

Taking part in the meeting on the Russian side were Oleg Davydov, foreign economic relations minister and deputy prime minister; Central Bank chairman Sergey Dubinin; and Deputy Finance Minister Andrey Vavilov.

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Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Gives Government 2 Weeks To Draft Program for Towns

LD2405064796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0627 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ARKHANGELSK, May 24 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin gave the government two weeks to consider and approve a development program for small towns.

Yeltsin told the 500 administration heads of small towns in Arkhangelsk Friday that "it took the government too long to tackle this issue." He said he intends to make the program presidential and keep it under his own supervision. Yeltsin believes that the program is a major component of the country's development.

The program should provide for changes in the use of tax collected in light of the specifics of small towns, employment there and the need to pay social debts.

The local authorities have a wider latitude now but lack funds, Yeltsin said. He added that numerous towns were not prepared for market economy.

Russia: Yeltsin Unlikely To Sign 'Unconstitutional' Land Code

MM2405115296 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 May 96 p 1

[Report by Yelena Ishkova: "Edict Gave Land Reform Its Second Wind, Only To See It Winded by the Duma"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As threatened, State Duma deputies yesterday adopted the Land Code on its third (that is, last) reading. The timing could not have been more unfortunate, as there is no real point confusing the peasantry at the height of the spring sowing campaign. The commotion will be considerable. Literally the other day we were talking to Konstantin Meshcheryakov, head of a reformed farm in Orel Oblast. He shared his plans with us: He wanted to become a full owner, but, as he only had one land share, he was prepared to buy plots of land from his fellow villagers, especially as there were plenty of pensioners wishing to sell. Now these plans will have to be given up as hopeless. The adopted Land Code prohibits the buying and selling of agricultural land; and it will now be impossible to sell or bequeath land shares or give them to your children.

I can imagine how many questions Vladimir Shvedov, Meshcheryakov's neighbor and head of a successful private farm, would like to ask. In the last three years he has not only invested tons of fertilizer in his land, but also tons of sweat: He gave himself a heart attack at the age of 41. Until now, he had been confident (and this confidence was instilled by the Constitution and President Yeltsin's land policy) that his hard work would not be in vain. If his eldest son, Dmitriy, did not want to work on the land when he graduated from the institute, he would be able to sell his plot of land and thereby recoup his investment. That is what happens in any country with a developed market economy. But now these plans will have to be abandoned.

So land reform, which was just beginning to get its second wind following the Presidential Edict "On Realizing Citizens' Constitutional Rights to Land," is now under threat. Even more dangerous, however, is the fact that the Land Code is unconstitutional, nullifying the very important concept of full private ownership of land.

Adoption of the Land Code obviously had to be hurried through because of the approaching presidential elections. The Communists, Agrarians, and members of the Liberal Democratic Party clearly regard it as a strong trump card in the election battle. In fact, their votes secured the adoption of this very important document. However, it still has to get through the sluices of the Federation Council, whose chairman, Yegor Stroyev, wants to see land reform advanced. Finally, Boris Yeltsin, who remains the only reliable guarantor of the Constitution, is unlikely to sign such an antimarket version of the Land Code.

Russia: Stepanov Murder 'May Be Linked' to Professional Duties

LD2305164696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1625 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — Russian High Court of Arbitration Chairman Veniamin Yakovlev told a news conference in Moscow Thursday that the Thursday murder of Deputy Russian Justice Minister Anatoliy Stepanov may be linked to his professional duties.

"I do not know whether it is so but it immediately occurs to me that yes, it is, though I, of course, cannot say for certain," said Yakovlev.

"I wish I was mistaken because if officials of such level are killed in connection with their professional duties, it will demonstrate the extent to which crime has pervaded our society," he said.

This is the worst danger for Russia now, which can only be overcome by establishing law as the main regulator of all relations in the country as soon as possible, he said. For this, even rather stern measures could be taken, said Yakovlev.

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Stepanov's body, with several wounds to the head, was found in his Moscow apartment Thursday morning.

A Moscow police official told Interfax Thursday afternoon that law enforcement agencies are currently working on two versions of the crime: a domestic or a materially-motivated murder.

Russia: Seleznev's Removal as CPRF Secretary Seen as Political

MM2405093496 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 May 96 p 4

[Report by Feliks Babitskiy under the "At the Headquarters" rubric: "Fighting in the 'Left-Wing' Camp"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The plenum of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] Central Committee has released Comrade G.N. Seleznev from his post of Central Committee secretary in connection with a transfer to a different job. This work is genuinely difficult and hardly makes it possible to hold two posts at once. That is why the comments made by Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov sound perfectly convincing. Seleznev is our good comrade, an intelligent worker, a professional (he runs the Duma). But, what can you do, you will agree that if he were to be secretary as well, he would be rushing about 12 hours a day and sitting endlessly on the telephone. The post is not an "honorary" one either, after all.

All this would be convincing if it were not for experience. For experience says that removal from a senior party job which is not accompanied by a rapid promotion in state service is a punishment. For what sins? Well, let us just recall that Gennadiy Seleznev had been cautiously expressing support for the idea of a coalition government, and had earlier even hinted that the CPRF would agree to the postponement of the election on such terms if an appropriate initiative was displayed by the president. And that smacks of opportunism.

To his misfortune, although one rank lower than Zyuganov in the party hierarchy, Seleznev occupies a far higher rank. Being far closer to the Kremlin in his post, he could not avoid moving his stance somewhat closer to the stance of the most moderate reformers. His predecessor, Ivan Rybkin, behaved in the same way. The former leader of the "Communists of Russia," one of the main defenders of the "White House" (from which Zyuganov, incidentally, "faded" in such a timely fashion), Ivan Petrovich moved so far to the right in the two years that he was speaker that not just the Communists but also the Agrarians no longer considered him as one of theirs. Gennadiy Nikolayevich cherishes his reputation as an orthodox Communist far more than him. But the situation compels him, so to speak.

And another detail: Seleznev's "transfer to a different job" occurred as long ago as six months ago. And the present CPRF Central Committee plenum is not the first since then. But for some reason it is only now that people have figured out that the speaker is finding things hard. The conclusion is clear: The party has decided to set a lost comrade right, giving him a chance to prove himself in the area where he is most needed. In the past anyone in his place would have given in without a murmur. But it is a different matter now. I suspect that if he wins the election, Gennadiy Zyuganov is already programming the reproduction of the three-year old conflict between the parliament and the president. Will things really return to their previous state?

Russia: Presidential Human Rights Commission Profiled

MM2405100696 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 May 96 p 4

[Report by Dmitriy Orlov: "Human Rights Commission: New Composition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 20 May Boris Yeltsin issued the edict "On the Human Rights Commission Under the Russian Federation President," thereby confirming this organ's composition.

The Human Rights Commission is a permanently functioning organ which has existed since the fall of 1993 and tackles questions of constitutional guarantees of citizens' rights. Annual reports on the situation with regard to observance of citizens' rights (ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI recently wrote about the last such report), which, as a rule, elicit a highly ambiguous response from society, have become the commission's tradition. Supporters of a reforming course invariably support the commission's activity. It was headed by Sergey Kovalev right up until the end of 1995.

The commission includes Vladimir Kartashkin (chairman), a well-known specialist on human rights, who for a long time worked on international humanitarian organizations; the publicist Aleksey Kiva; the writer Andrey Nuykin; Sergey Krylov, deputy minister of foreign affairs; Nikolay Monakhov, attorney, rights campaigner, and member of the Moscow Helsinki Group; and a number of scientists and publicists.

Mikhail Krasnov, the Russian president's assistant on legal issues, declared recently at the congress of rights-campaigning organizations that the head of state intends in the very near future to create effective mechanisms to protect the civic and socioeconomic rights and the political freedoms of Russians. With the setting up of this commission the country's citizens receive confirmation

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of the president's intentions. Under conditions when the post of plenipotentiary for human rights is vacant, presidential structures (the Russian Federation president's Main Administration for Questions of Citizens' Constitutional Guarantees and the new composition of the Human Rights Commission) will be obliged for the time being to resolve these problems without an ombudsman. But — and the reader knows this — there are quite a few problems.

Military Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Declares Russia To Keep Strong Armed Forces

LD2305174896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1727 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — President and Supreme Commander-in-Chief Boris Yeltsin has declared that Russia has been and will remain a great world power and keep its reliable, strong and capable armed forces.

The Russian army and navy will remain under the protection of the constitution, law and president, says Yeltsin's appeal to the personnel of the armed forces, circulated by the presidential press service Thursday.

Yeltsin said a transfer of troops unique in scale has been conducted during the past few years. In less than three years, Russia withdrew from foreign territory some 1.2 million servicemen, scores of thousands of combat vehicles, as well as strategic arms and army property. New army groups were formed in key strategic directions.

Contractual army service has become a reality, the president said, thus a practical step has been taken toward a professional army. Conscripts are sent to areas of armed conflicts and for combat operations only on a voluntary basis.

At the same time Yeltsin admitted that the army is experiencing the same difficulties as the rest of the nation. It has many problems, the budget does not fully reflect the needs of the Armed Forces, payments are sometimes delayed, and the modernization process is slow, he said.

Yeltsin said the main objective of the current military reform was to form a professional army enjoying popular support and supplied with everything necessary.

"The role of the General Staff as the body of direct operational leadership should grow in the framework of reforming the system of military command," Yeltsin said.

He said the army personnel will be reduced primarily at the expense of redundant and understaffed units irrelevant for the general defense capability of the country.

Yeltsin said the CIS defense union would get a new impetus with the introduction of joint planning of the use of troops, primarily for the prevention and settlement of local conflicts in situations threatening Russian security.

"Formations and units will be deployed in the directions of the greatest security threats," he said. The share of funds for modernizing armaments and military hardware in the overall defense budget will be increased.

Yeltsin described as an inseparable part of the army reform the restructuring of the defense industry for rearming the army and navy, and preserving and advancing the scientific and industrial potential of the country.

Russia: Gromov May Replace Grachev as Defense Minister

LD2305202196 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1700 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yeltsin today issued a message to the Russian army, to mark the fourth anniversary of the signing of a decree to establish the Russian armed forces. Much has been done since then, the president said. However, the Russian army still faces numerous problems. It is experiencing the same difficulties as our society as a whole. The main ones are shortages of finance and some acute social problems. But in his message, the president focused on military reform. The aim is to create a professional army that enjoys popular support, authority, and respect.

The focal point of military reform will be the problems of servicemen and civilians in the armed forces. The role of the general staff will grow, as the body directly running the army. The army will be cut back. Within overall defense spending, the proportion going to modernization of combat equipment will be increased.

It is worth noting that on the same day that he issued a message underlining his commitment to military reform, Boris Yeltsin met in the Kremlin with Boris Gromov, one of Pavel Grachev's most persistent critics and until recently out of favor.

Until 1992 Boris Gromov was deputy defense minister, but a year and a half ago he was moved to the foreign ministry as a military advisor. After that, he was elected to the State Duma.

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The ITAR-TASS news agency reported today that the situation in the country in the run-up to the presidential elections was discussed during today's meeting. They also discussed military reform.

This kind of subject is unlikely to be discussed with a Duma deputy unless he has been specially authorized. An ITAR-TASS columnist interprets today's meeting as preparation of public opinion for the departure of Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and the appointment to the job of Boris Gromov.

Russia: Navy Commander Gromov Inspects New Missile-Armed Ship

LD2305140096 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0800 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Admiral Gromov, commander in chief of the Russian Navy, who arrived in Kaliningrad, familiarized himself with a new missile-armed craft, which sailors have christened the ship of the 21st century. [video shows the vessel, Gromov speaking, and other ships]

[Correspondent Chekalin] One cannot believe that this modest looking, small catamaran is capable, thanks to its gas turbine engines, of developing high cruising speed and hovering, and that its firepower exceeds that of a destroyer. It was build by a shipyard on the River Volga. The head vessel of the new series is called Samum [as heard] and is a gift from Russian ship builders for the 300th anniversary of the fleet. The high standard of the ship's electronic controls and its combat systems, which is typical of the defense industry, reduces to a minimum the number of staff maintaining the equipment. But this staff needs to be so highly qualified, for a sailor cannot master this equipment during the two years fixed for military service.

[Begin Gromov recording] Of course, contractual service offers exactly these opportunities, so that people will know their weapons and will be able to operate them competently and safely and — this is the main thing — will be able to use them competently when the need arises. [end recording]

[Chekalin] The commander in chief believes that despite the financial hardships of the transitional period, the country is maintaining the fleet's high combat effectiveness and replenishing it with new modern vessels.

[Begin Gromov recording] By the end of the year we will have several vessels. Major vessels will include the Petr Velikiy, the Admiral Chabanenko, two submarines, and this vessel. [end recording]

Russia: Letter Criticizes Grachev's Press Secretary

MK2405073096 Moscow OBSHCHAYA GAZETA in Russian No. 20/148, 23-29 May 96 (signed to press 22 May 96) p 8

[Message to OBSHCHAYA GAZETA by unidentified Defense Ministry officers: "The Defense Minister's Belligerent Comrade in Arms"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "There were times when your newspaper used to write much about goings-on at the Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation and the Russian Armed Forces. Currently such publications have grown more scarce. We do not think that your reasons for this are similar to those of other media, where certain journalists who used to write about outrages at the Defense Ministry have been simply bought off.

"In the meantime, life in the building on Arbatskaya Square is still full of miracles, that have a woeful impact on the activity of the Defense Ministry, the General Staff, and the status of the Armed Forces. This is what our letter is about. We regret being unable to sign it. But every fact mentioned in the letter is authentic, and your newspaper's journalists will not find it difficult to check them.

"Respectfully,

[signed] "Officers of the Defense Ministry

"An overwhelming majority of officers and generals who are ex officio obliged to deal with Yelena Agapova, press secretary of the defense minister, curse the day and the hour when she stepped over the ministry's threshold. This happened in 1992, after she, then a journalist from the department of servicemen's everyday life, had come to Grachev's attention during one of his visits to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA.

"Agapova managed to fit into the minister's entourage smoothly and quickly. There is nothing surprising about it. Despite a plethora of aides, the minister's team did not have a single man capable of expressing his (or the minister's) views on paper in such a way that they would look at least more or less grammatically correct and logical. Her 20-year experience with KRASNAYA ZVEZDA came in handy for the newly appointed press secretary.

"Agapova realized that she was bound to encounter certain difficulties in fulfilling her immediate duties as press secretary. It is simply inadvisable for Pavel Sergeyevich [Grachev] to meet with journalists, because, being unpredictable in his behavior and utterances, he can blurt out something that can be very diffi-

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cult to disavow afterward. The press secretary has found the following way out: She has limited Grachev's contact with journalists to a minimum and introduced a practice of giving only "tested" journalists — that is, those with hands well greased — access to the minister. If any of them was found guilty — ventured to hurl even a minor criticism at the minister — he was excommunicated right away; he was no longer invited to accompany Grachev during his trips and denied access to information. But since the press goes on criticizing the best defense minister of all times and Pavel Sergeyevich reacts to it very nervously, Agapova has tried to shield him from these troubles as well: She assumed the exclusive right to brief him on what the papers say. The others were strictly forbidden to show newspapers to the minister. Currently, even press digests, drawn up by the Information Directorate especially for the Defense Ministry's top leadership, do not reach Grachev's desk.

"Generally speaking, in the view of Agapova, which she does not even attempt to conceal, there are only two worthy persons at the Defense Ministry: the minister and she herself. The rest are morons. Grachev himself has contributed to his subordinate's pathological feeling of self-importance. He has constantly set Agapova in public against members of his closest entourage, even his deputies and other collegium members. "You think that I am so clever," Grachev has repeatedly confessed, "but in fact it's she." Agapova is skillfully exploiting his attitude to her. No ministerial speeches at internal conferences or collegium meetings reach the minister without her review and correction. She is entitled to enter the minister's office at any time, whatever the minister might be doing, over which she has been constantly at loggerheads with Colonel General V. Lapshov, the minister's chief of staff. She intervenes in the work of the General Staff, main and central directorates, demands that she be initiated in everything under the sun. She attends secret meetings, participates in discussions of the most confidential questions that are kept secret even from deputy ministers, even though she has no security clearance.

"On the historic night of 3 and 4 October 1993, when the fate of the White House was being decided in Grachev's office in the presence of Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin, she was behind the door — in the minister's break room — and subsequently acted out the episode, describing the way each one of them was bearing himself. On the same night, when Grachev was meeting with a detachment of Afghanistan War veterans who came to visit him, she accompanied the minister, armed with the pistol he gave her as a present, issued orders on his behalf, brandished Yeltsin's written order to take the parliamentary building by assault, which the minister allegedly entrusted to her keeping, having no trust in anyone else. Military unit commanders who were summoned to the Defense Ministry on that night were baffled: What on earth is Agapova doing here?

"Those who openly ignore Agapova pay dearly for that. Colonel Generals B. Gromov, G. Kondratyev, V. Mironov, all deputy defense ministers, were dismissed from office with her active assistance. Others — First Deputy Defense Minister A. Kokoshin; Colonel General Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the General Staff; Deputy Minister Colonel General V. Toporov; Colonel Generals V. Semenov and V. Prudnikov, chiefs of main directorates — have found themselves on the list of undesirable persons. Settling scores with those who are not in her good graces, she skillfully chooses a moment to slip yet another compromising material into the minister's hand.

"Agapova's relations with her former colleagues from KRASNAYA ZVEZDA cannot be worse. The press secretary starts every morning by taking Chief Editor Chupakhin to task for various blunders made by the newspaper — most often, for its failure to defend the minister from media attacks and to rebuff the slanderers. This is done almost always with a reference to the defense minister: You see, Pavel Sergeyevich is very much displeased. Attempts by officers of the Information Directorate, many of whom are former KRASNAYA ZVEZDA journalists, to protect the paper and its chief editor from groundless accusations invariably lead to angry outbursts. Directorate staffers says that Agapova gets particularly outraged when she is reminded that Chupakhin should long have been promoted to the next rank. The post of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA chief editor is to be held by a general. This rank means the recognition of not only his personal accomplishments, but also the paper's authority and the ministry's attitude to it. General Kosarev, chief of the Information Directorate, has repeatedly tried to persuade Agapova of that, but in the end he only fell out with the "boss" altogether. Yet, once he managed to convince her. A citation was drawn up for Chupakhin's promotion, Grachev signed it, and all the requisite documents were sent to the Main Personnel Directorate. But hardly a week had passed when, looking through a fresh issue of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, Agapova again cursed up a blue streak, immediately picked up the receiver of her "Kremlin" telephone line, and demanded from Colonel General Vysotskiy (chief of the Main Personnel Directorate) that Chupakhin's promotion papers be returned. They are still sitting somewhere in the farthest drawer of Agapova's desk.

"When Agapova was promoted — she became the minister's assistant — Grachev subordinated to her the

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Defense Ministry's Information Directorate, which had formerly been always supervised by the minister. The directorate officers' is an unenviable lot: They live as if on a volcano, being completely dependent on the whims of their capricious commander. Over the past three years, the directorate's structure has been changed four times. Last May, General Kosarev, directorate chief, asked Grachev to subordinate his directorate to the minister or one of his first deputies, and also outlined his views on how the effectiveness of information work could be raised. The minister initially accepted the arguments, but soon... changed his mind. The directorate chief had to tender his resignation to Grachev.

"During her tenure Agapova has surrounded herself with a numerous and well-greased entourage. Those who display particular loyalty and vigorously defend the interests of the best defense minister of all times and his belligerent comrade in arms have everything they might wish: They are rewarded with individual weapons, medals, posts, and all kinds of other perks. The Russian Armed Forces are getting from them nothing but harm.

P.S. *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA has already reported about Ms. Agapova and her role in running the Defense Ministry (No. 4, 1994). Judging by the Defense Ministry officers' letter, mores in this agency are not susceptible to change. At any rate, they have not changed for the better. Yet, over the past several days a rumor passed around Moscow saying that the defense minister is about to be replaced. This has also been already reported — nearly every month. This is not news. We will believe in it once he is replaced.*

Russia: Urgency Commission Orders Action on Arms Industry Funds

MM2305133896 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 23 May 96 p 1

["Own Information" report: "Defense Industry Problems on the Agenda"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 21 May Russian Federation First Deputy Defense Minister Andrey Kokoshin addressed a session of the Russian Federation Government Commission on Urgent Questions chaired by Government First Deputy Chairman Oleg Soskovets.

The first deputy defense minister noted the special importance of the production of sophisticated equipment and the use of high technology at enterprises in the Siberian and Far East regions in order to preserve and develop the economic and social potential of the eastern part of Russia. In particular, he addressed the need to create a special system of tariffs for deliveries and energy supply in view of Siberian and Far Eastern regional peculiarities.

Andrey Kokoshin also focused attention on the need to implement the president's 8 May edict "On Priority Measures To Support Russian Federation Defense Complex Enterprises" and the government-approved payment schedule for the state defense order. He particularly stressed the need to allocate cash to resolve first and foremost the problem of paying wages.

The Commission on Urgent Questions instructed the Russian Finance Ministry to resolve this question in the proper way and increase the proportion of cash in the financial resources allocated to pay for the state order.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Condemns CIS Support for Yeltsin as 'Interference'

LD2305122596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1104 GMT 23 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 23 May — The State Duma regards the 17 May statement by CIS heads of state supporting Boris Yeltsin at the upcoming presidential elections as "flagrant interference in Russia's internal affairs, as blatant pressure on citizens of Russia living abroad." A document adopted today says this. It stresses that "the Duma resolutely protests such interference and has asked the legislative (representative) bodies whose heads voted in support of this statement to assess this political action.

The CIS heads of state officially adopted a statement on 17 May supporting the democratic processes in Russia, but they closely linked these processes with the figure of Boris Yeltsin.

The Duma points out that Boris Yeltsin has already been Russia's president for five years, and that Russians "are quite capable of deciding whether or not they should vote for this president in the elections," proceeding from the actual results of his work.

It also appealed to the peoples of Russia to ignore "this kind of appeal from abroad," and said that "the voters — the citizens of Russia — are the only ones with the right to decide the fate of the presidential post in Russia."

Russia: Duma Approves Law for Transition of Power After Elections

LD2405073896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0729 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 24 (Interfax) — The Russian Duma approved a law on the transfer of

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presidential power after the elections Friday by a vote of 332 to 1.

The law stipulates that the president-elect will assume his office 30 days after the official declaration of election results. He must either put on hold or cancel his membership in any political party or social movement for the duration of his term.

During the one month transition period, the outgoing president must inform the president-elect of all decisions connected with the declaration of an emergency or military situation, and also about the use of the armed forces.

The outgoing president and president-elect must reach an official agreement during the transition period which will allow the president-elect to attend all cabinet, Security Council, parliament, or government meetings.

The cabinet must resign when the president-elect assumes office. The latter assigns a prime minister before approval by the Duma. The old cabinet continues work during this period until the formation of a new cabinet, which is approved by the president after taking into account the prime minister's suggestions.

President Boris Yeltsin has approved the law's conceptual plan, according to Deputy Oleg Mironov (Communist), a member of the Duma's legislative committee.

The law is now sent on for approval to the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament.

Russia: Yeltsin To Veto Duma-Passed Land Code

LD2405055296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0544 GMT 24 May 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ARKHANGELSK May 24 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin sharply criticised the land code passed by the communist-dominated State Duma on Thursday [24 May] and said he would veto it.

"I do not support the law on the land code passed by the State Duma", Yeltsin said on Friday at a meeting with veteran navymen in the northern city of Arkhangelsk.

"The sale and purchase of land was not included into it. I want to use my right of veto. Let them amend it (land code)", the president said.

The code actually contradicts a Yeltsin's decree which allows to sell and buy land.

Russia: Legislators Request More Funds To Maintain Duma

LD2305183496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1456 GMT 23 May 96

[By Igor Zhukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Itar-Tass) — The federal budget funds appropriated to maintain the lower house of Russian parliament are insufficient to ensure the State Duma's normal functioning, according to participants in today's meeting between State Duma chief of staff Nikolay Troshkin and representatives of the Yabloko faction.

The State duma owes some eight billion roubles to the hotel Rossiya and 1.5 billion roubles to the hotel Moskva where its members are accommodated.

Only ten members who sat in parliament of the preceding convocation have left the office apartments they occupied as parliament members, although the Duma had told them to leave before April 25, 1996. According to Nikolay Troshkin, all the others are waiting for a new apartment block to go up in Moscow, although that will not solve the problem as some of their successors in the State Duma are likely to join the waiting list at the end of their term in parliament.

The State Duma also owes more than four billion roubles to the car park which provides transportation services to Russian MPs. State Duma staff member Pavel Averin told Itar-Tass he sees no way to repay the debt as the Duma has no resources for the purpose and none are in sight.

Telephone communications are another headache as the Federal Agency of Government Communications is unable to provide enough telephones to meet the requirements of the MPs and, at the same time, ensure full confidentiality of their phone conversations in keeping with the standards for the protection of the state secrets.

The only way out is the round-the-clock functioning of the government communications centre located in the State Duma, participants in today's meeting stressed.

On the whole, they expressed satisfaction with the activity of the staff of the lower house of parliament aimed at ensuring the normal functioning of the State Duma.

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Russia: Parliament Approves Basics of New Tax Code

LD2305134196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1330 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — The Russian parliament approved the basic provisions of the general part of Russia's new tax code Thursday [23 May], Samara Region Governor Konstantin Titov told Interfax Thursday.

Titov, who is the chairman of the Federation Council Budget and Tax Committee, stressed the need for the adoption of the document to be stepped up.

Remarks and objections voiced during the debate will be considered by an ad hoc conciliatory commission, he said.

The existing taxation system must not be discarded, because the adaptation will be extremely hard and will last for two or three years, Russian Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Shatalov told Interfax. In addition, a completely new taxation system will invalidate all Russia's agreements with other countries on the prevention of double taxation, he said.

The tax code will preserve the basic taxes, namely VAT and profit tax, but their conditions will be dramatically adjusted, Shatalov said. The document reduces the number of taxes applied in Russia by four times, he noted.

The amendments to the existing tax system will reduce the tax burden from 33 percent of the gross domestic product in 1996 to 32.3 percent when introduced.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Chechen Rebel Leader Agrees to Talks With Yeltsin in Moscow

AU2305154896 Paris AFP in English 1532 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, May 23 (AFP) — Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev has agreed in principle to peace talks in Moscow with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation [OSCE] in Europe said Thursday.

Yandarbiyev "has agreed on this procedure and we are waiting for his confirmation," Tim Guldimann, head of the OSCE group which mediated the accord on the proposed talks, told AFP.

Russia: Yandarbiyev Aid Says Rebels 'Ready for Sensible Compromises'

LD2405122096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1039 GMT 24 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asuyev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Groznyy, 24 May (ITAR-TASS) — "We are ready for sensible compromises for the sake of ending the war and we await such an approach from Moscow on the issue of settling relations between the two sides," said Movlen Salamov, aide to Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, speaking today during a meeting with an ITAR-TASS correspondent in one of the villages in southern Chechnya.

Representatives of the separatists camp are keeping secret information about a possible meeting between Boris Yeltsin and Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev. In the conversation with an ITAR-TASS correspondent Movlen Salamov said that "details will probably be announced after the meeting or directly at the meeting on the agreement of both sides."

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev's aide confirmed that leaders of the Union of Muslims of Russia, Tim Guldimann, leader of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] group working in Groznyy, and a number of other organizations and figures took an active part in arranging this meeting. [passage omitted]

At the same time the OSCE working group in Chechnya circulated a statement saying that Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev confirmed the OSCE's 23 May information on his meeting with Boris Yeltsin in Moscow.

Russia: Yeltsin Comments on Talks With Yandarbiyev

LD2305180996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1720 GMT 23 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorzh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Archangel, 23 May (Itar-Tass) — It was reported today that Russian President Boris Yeltsin had made a final decision to go to Chechnya, while the rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev will go to Moscow for talks.

Commenting on this event at Archangel airport, Boris Yeltsin had this to say to ITAR-TASS: "I gave a go-ahead to this visit." The conversation between Yeltsin and the journalist went on:

— You mean your visit to Groznyy or Yandarbiyev's to Moscow?

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— Both ways; his visit here and my visit there.

— Who will be the first?

— He (Yandarbiyev) will first travel to Moscow for the talks. So, the ice has been broken, and this is very important. And (the settlement process) will move on.

Yeltsin was met by local people in the Archangel airport. A lively discussion took place. Yeltsin was asked whether he was feeling cold in Archangel compared to Moscow. "I have come and brought warmer weather into everything, including financial matters," he answered.

Russia: Zavgayev Doubts 'Advisability' of Yeltsin-Yandarbiyev Talks

LD2405064496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0633 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, May 24 (Interfax) — The head of Chechnya's pro-Moscow government Doku Zavgayev doubts the advisability of talks between Russian President Yeltsin and Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

"No one backs Yandarbiyev, he fends for himself," Zavgayev told INTERFAX.

Nonetheless, Zavgayev sees the need for "any contact that may lead to peace in Chechnya."

In his capacity of a member of the Chechen settlement commission Zavgayev was aware of preparations for talks between Moscow and Yandarbiyev but knew little about them.

He is also ready to meet with Yandarbiyev and anyone who can influence the course of developments, he stressed.

OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] emissary for Chechnya Tim Guldimann declared Thursday Yeltsin and Yandarbiyev had agreed to hold an early meeting, and Moscow confirmed what he said. Yeltsin said Thursday the meeting would take place before he visited Chechnya.

Russia: Federal Troops Secure Chechen Village of Bamut

LD2305155196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1514 GMT 23 May 96

[ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 23rd May (Itar-Tass) — The rebels who were holding up in Bamut have been destroyed, 58th Army Commander Lieutenant-General Gennadiy Troshev, who returned from the area of the fighting, told newsmen in Khankala, a suburb of Groznyy. Only a few rebels have managed to escape, he said. Special subunits of the Russian Defense Ministry entered the village in the afternoon and began the clearing-up operation, looking for dispersed groups of fighters, arms and munitions dumps and mines, Troshev added.

He did not name the exact number of rebel casualties, but said that bodies of foreign mercenaries have been found on the battlefield.

Speaking of losses among the federal troops, Gen. Troshev quoted updated reports as saying that by 1730 Moscow time [1330 GMT], when he returned to Khankala, 23 federal servicemen were killed and 60 injured. This was the final figure, he said.

Russia: Yeltsin Addresses Small Town Mayors in Arkhangelsk

LD2405092296 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0700 GMT 24 May 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] It became known yesterday that Yeltsin finally decided to go to Chechnya. The president stated this at Arkhangelsk airport where he arrived yesterday evening on a working visit. True, Yeltsin made the reservation that his trip to Groznyy will be preceded by a visit to Moscow by the separatist Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

But Chechnya was not the only subject that the president spoke about in Arkhangelsk. Today Yeltsin met with the leaders of Russian small towns.

[Correspondent A. Peslyak] The president set the tone for further discussion when he noted that 500 mayors from small towns were present in the auditorium. Moreover, he added, the concept of small towns and small peoples does not exist:

[Begin Yeltsin recording] It is precisely in small towns that age-old historical and cultural traditions have been preserved. Ancient national values, in which our country is so rich, are concentrated there. It is mainly these towns that hold Russia together. [end recording]

But having given them freedom of initiative, Yeltsin stressed, the Russian authorities did not create a sufficiently strong financial basis to support small towns. However, the local authorities themselves are not always willing to go over to a market economy. The Kremlin and the government received proposals from the mayors of small towns. Initiatives will be worked out for changing taxation, compensating expenditure, resolving the unemployment problem,and returning federal debts. Yeltsin noted that he will sign a federal program for the

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development of small towns which will become presidential ones. The important role of small towns in organizing everyday life was stressed.

[Begin Yeltsin recording] They are precisely the ones that have served as the buttress of the Russian district [zemstvo], of local self-government. Today local self-government is the foundation of the state and a civic society. [end recording]

Other subjects in Yeltsin's speech were the attention paid to small towns as a focal point for services for the rural population and the return of fellow citizens, especially from the countries of the CIS. Yeltsin emphasized the significance of the new federal program on fellow citizens and specific phenomena like creating a friendly and helpful atmosphere for newcomers as in Belgorod region. [video shows Yeltsin speaking from a rostrum to the audience of mayors]

Russia: Yeltsin Meets Residents, Students in Arkhangelsk

LD2405122296 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0500 GMT 24 May 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast by announcer Igor Vykhukholev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday on his arrival in Archangelsk, Yeltsin made a sensational statement about an accord with leader of the Chechen separatists Yandarbiyev on the beginning of talks. Our special correspondents reports:

[Begin recording] [Correspondents Vladimir Polozhentsev, Valeriy Anuchin, Igor Muravyev and Oleg Kul] At 2020 the presidential airliner touched down on the runway at Archangelsk airport. Today the president did not wish to speak to the press, but regarding his possible visit to Chechnya, he said:

[Yeltsin] I have agreed to the visit.

[Unidentified correspondent] To Groznyy?

[Yeltsin] Yes.

[Correspondent] Your visit to Groznyy or Yandarbiyev's to Moscow?

[Yeltsin] No, both. Both, here and there.

[Correspondent] His visit here, and my visit there.

[Correspondent] Who will be the first?

[Unidentified voice] That will do, lads.

[Yeltsin] Yandarbiyev, he first will come to Moscow for talks.

[Correspondent] When? Why? Don't push it. Don't push it.

[Yeltsin] So, the ice has broken, and this is very important. And further on it will move on.

[Correspondent] The land of Archangelsk is being washed by the waters of three seas along the stretch of 3,000 km, and its area considerably exceeds that of France. Initially Archangelsk was founded by Ivan the Terrible as a Russian shipyard. The mastering of the Arctic started from here. The country's own timber industry took root here. Today the north of the country washed by the White Sea is the home of the Russian center for nuclear shipbuilding, there is a major military base in Severodvinsk, a nuclear test ground on Novaya Zemlya, and a cosmodrome, which is the only working cosmodrome in the country, in Plesetsk. [video shows a motorcade passing through the town, people waving hands and flags, Yeltsin on a walkabout speaking to a group of young people, a banner in the streets reading: "Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin is the president of all Russians", the open museum]

Naturally, the residents of the town asked the president when the the economy would start to pick up.

[Female] We have been waiting for you.

[Yeltsin] Do you live well?

[Young people] It is very cold.

[Yeltsin] Cold?

[Young people] Very cold. You should have brought warm weather with you.

[Yeltsin] I thought I came [phrase indistinct]. Now there is a special thaw in all affairs, including financial affairs.

[Voices from the crowd] That's good. This is the main thing.

[Yeltsin] Yes, this is the main thing. I think that funds will start arriving as of tomorrow. Slowly, but they will be coming, coming, coming...

[Voice in the crowd] This is the main thing. Yes.

[Yeltsin] ...At first we will deal with the public sector — teachers, doctors, students ...

[A young man] Yes, students...

[Yeltsin] Without fail, without fail. Mothers with children, then the industrial sphere. That's the way. I have brought four edicts with me on various aspects: one for today, on the prospects for the socio-economic development of Archangelsk Region, on developing the shelf, on the participation of industrial enterprises so that all

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of them would have a workload. All enterprises, not just in Severodvinsk, which will be dealing with this, but other industrial enterprises as well. That's it.

[Correspondent] Tomorrow the president will have a very busy program. In the morning he will meet mayors of small towns. A total of 600 mayors, who are members of the union, have been invited to the meeting. The main task of the union is to unite the efforts of small towns in overcoming the socio-economic backwardness and in developing local democracy and real self-government. After this the Russian president will visit the open museum "Malyye Karely," take part in the festivities to mark the Slavonic literature day as tomorrow is the day for commemorating Saints Kirill and Mefodiy, who wrote the Slavonic ABC. Every year a new town is selected to host these festivities. This year it is Archangelsk.

Tomorrow the president will also meet workers of the Salambalskiy [as heard] timber-processing combine. In the evening at the Archangelsk drama theatre Boris Yeltsin plans to speak to young people. Though his first meeting with students has already taken place today. [video shows a group of students with the banner "Yeltsin — Our President"]

[Students] Boris Nikolayevich, [phrase indistinct]. Boris Nikolayevich, students send you their greetings. From the Academy and Medical Academy, as well. Students of the Medical Academy are greeting you. Greetings. And from students of special technical schools too.

[Yeltsin] I have already raised grants for technical schools. [laughter]

[Students] Yes... Higher educational establishments need this. Higher educational establishments, [word indistinct] for example.

[Yeltsin] I have raised [grants] for higher educational establishments about half a year ago when I visited the Bauman University. I raised it by 20 percent. Wait a little while, and then we will raise it. Wait a little while, and we will raise grants this year without fail. I mean this year we will raise grants.

[Various voices] We will wait till pension.

[Yeltsin] Hold on.

[Students] We greet you... We will try... [weak applause] Good health to you, Boris Nikolayevich. [video shows the motorcade carrying Yeltsin leaving] [end recording]

Russia: Results of Yeltsin 'Siberian Accord' Meeting Viewed

MM2305084796 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 21 May 96 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Igolkin: "Program Created Not in Center but in Regions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Omsk — Last Sunday the leaders of the 19 republics, okrugs, krays, and oblasts embraced by the "Siberian Accord" interregional economic cooperation association gathered in Omsk to discuss the socioeconomic development prospects and current problems of this immense territory occupying a third of the country.

The attendance of Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin at this event gives it significance.

This bears witness to the authority of the association which was formed five years ago as a voluntary economic association to coordinate the regions' efforts to implement the reforms and to manage Siberia's natural resources and industrial potential wisely. "Siberian Accord" works in a purposeful manner on very important programs for agricultural processing, agricultural machine-building, conversion, and industrial policy.

There was a time when the center regarded "Siberian Accord" with some alarm, fearing that it had separatist tendencies. But the association is strictly an economic structure that does not pursue any political aims. The last two and a half years under the leadership of Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhayev have been a particularly dynamic, constructive, and creative period for "Siberian Accord."

Boris Yeltsin did not hide the fact that he was counting on a serious and open discussion with the Siberians at the council session, which finally took place. The Russian Federation president is very familiar with Siberia's problems. He considers that the time has come not just to develop it as a source of natural resources, but to use them to improve the economy and increase the standard of living for people. It is the federal authorities' task to facilitate this process. Meaning that a nationwide long-term program for Siberia's development is necessary. But it should not be the center that draws it up but the regions themselves with the active assistance of local scholars.

It is intended that a Siberian development program for the next nine years should be completed by midway through next year.

An edict on this has already been signed. The program will receive strong state support; its clients include practically all the main federal ministries and departments.

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Here priority will only be given to effective projects that will bring genuine benefits.

The president also supported "Siberian Accord's" initiative to develop its own energy strategy and to create a zonal energy commission as a section of an analogous federal structure. Siberia's output will become competitive if the energy sources here cost less than in other regions. The president proposes that for this it is necessary to establish different prices for gas taking into consideration expenditure on transportation, and no less than half the energy sources should be processed in the provinces with only that which remains being sold.

The Achilles' heel of the Siberian economy is railroad transportation. Owing to the high cost of using the railroads, local producers are losing their traditional sales territories. The state has taken the step of temporarily stabilizing tariffs. But this is already genuine help on the part of the center for the Siberian enterprises, a kind of credit, as the federal budget cannot go on subsidizing tariffs for ever.

Another concrete result of Boris Yeltsin's visit was the signing of an agreement on the delimitation of areas of responsibility and powers of the organs of state power of the Federation and Omsk Oblast. The creation of conditions for restructuring the region's economy, the drawing up and approval of a federal program for its socioeconomic development, foreign economic activities with the Republic of Kazakhstan, the coordination of pricing policy, and other areas of responsibility pertain to joint areas of responsibility aside from those stipulated by the Constitution. The oblast has the right to participate autonomously as well as at the direction of the Federation in international and foreign economic relations.

The program for B. Yeltsin's visit to the Omsk area was not limited to business matters alone. In line with recent trips of this kind made by him, he met with people by the Marshal G. Zhukov monument and visited the oblast academic library named for Pushkin, which was built a year ago and is considered by experts to be one of the first examples of 21st century architecture. The celebrated creative collective — the Omsk State Russian People's Choir greeted the welcome guest with a song in his honor, and one of the many placards which representatives of the Russian national movement brought along expressed very eloquently the mood of the thousand Omsk residents who had gathered by the library: "A new perestroyka means disaster, but we say "yes" to President Yeltsin!"

Russia: Grachev Visit Urals; Comments on Yeltsin, Army Reform

MM2405100396 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 23 May 96 p 1

[Report by Captain Second Rank Aleksandr Pelts: "Things Looking Up in Urals Military District. So Believes Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Defense Minister, Who Is Continuing His Work Among Troops"]

[FBIS Translated Text] After visiting the garrison in Shadrinsk he arrived in Yekaterinburg, where a district command and staff exercise was taking place at the time. The defense minister familiarized himself with the exercise plan and listened to the intelligence chief and chief of the district operations directorate about the progress of the command and staff exercise. After hearing them out the defense minister made a number of fundamental corrections, focusing the command's attention on military-strategic questions.

After listening to the exercise leaders the defense minister met with the district directorate's personnel and Yekaterinburg Garrison officers. First of all he noted that his current tour of Urals Military District troops had enabled him to become acquainted with the condition of troops in more detail and gain a deeper understanding of the problems being tackled in the district. The minister gave the state of affairs in the Urals Military District a good appraisal, stressing that people had started to show optimism, certainty of the need to continue the policy of reforms, and the conviction that there is no way back and that Russia's future lies in its democratic development.

"As a result of my conversations and meetings with servicemen and members of their families," Army Gen. Grachev noted, "I came to the unequivocal conclusion that people believe that right now the main thing for Russia is stability, that wavering cannot be allowed, and that the transformations which have been begun must be consistently continued. They associate all this with the activity of our supreme commander in chief, Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. Only he is capable of and knows how to talk and act not on behalf of one party or 'ideology' but for the sake of the interests of Russia and its peoples. "

The defense minister dwelled in detail on areas of Russian Armed Forces organizational development and the progress of military reform. Here he stressed that military reform is a matter not just for the Army but above all for the state. Army Gen. Grachev noted the Urals servicemen's energetic work by to transform the

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district and support the units withdrawn to its territory from nearby foreign countries.

The minister drew the attention of those present to the need to improve the briefing of personnel on the positive aspects which have been achieved during military organizational development. "There has been enough negativity and 'painting things black,'" he stressed, "people must see the positive. There is plenty of it, including in the Urals Military District."

The defense minister rewarded a large group of Urals officers with valuable gifts for excellent service.

Russia: Grachev Tour of Transbaykal Garrisons Viewed

MM2405092696 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 24 May 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Pelts and Aleksandr Davidyuk: "Air Defense Troops Must Be Preserved as Branch of Armed Forces. Russian Federation Defense Minister Army General Pavel Grachev Said This During Tour of Transbaykal Military District Garrisons"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Thursday [23 May] Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Federation defense minister, continued his work among the troops of the Transbaykal Military District. This is his third trip to the Chita area. The minister has already been to Buryatia, Yakutia, and Irkutsk, so he is fairly well acquainted with the region. The minister has come back from these visits to the district's troops and garrisons with a feeling of profound satisfaction. He is impressed by people serving in this bleak area motivated by duty to the fatherland and loyalty to their oath and aware of the importance of defending the motherland's hallowed borders.

Army Gen. Pavel Grachev began his working day by visiting an Air Defense guards corps commanded by Lieutenant General Yevgeniy Boltov. The corps' guards antiaircraft missile regiment of Colonel Vladimir Sadovoy has switched to new equipment and taken up combat alert duty in a very short period of time. According to the defense minister's scenario instructions, Colonel Mikhail Remis' antiaircraft missile guards division was removed from its permanent base, completed a march, and took up its assigned combat position. Army Gen. Pavel Grachev noted the successful actions of Guards Majors Aleksey Markov and Vasiliy Abramtsev and Guards Senior Lieutenant Dmitriy Paklin's. During a conversation with officers the defense minister said that the Air Defense Troops must preserved without fail as a branch of the Armed Forces. Over the next two years, Army Gen. Pavel Grachev noted, the Air Defense Troops must switch to a new arms system — S-300 antiaircraft missile systems. According to him, Strategic Missile Forces and Air Defense Forces units must be at constant combat readiness and at least 90-percent manned. With Air Defense Troops stationed around Russia's borders equipped with S-300 systems, which are unparalleled in the world, you can guarantee that a fairly large number of the enemy's air targets will be rebuffed. These targets can be destroyed before they approach Russia's borders, Pavel Grachev noted.

The motorized rifle training regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Igor Andreyev was the next destination on the Russian Federation defense minister's tour of the Transbaykal Military District. Here Army Gen. Pavel Grachev inspected the new enlisted mess fitted with modern equipment. Yakutia President Mikhail Nikolayev earmarked 100 million rubles from his funds to kit out this mess. What is more, the best representatives of Yakutia's young people are being sent to serve in the regiment.

Then the Russian defense minister's route took him to one of the most remote garrisons, where Major General Yevgeniy Abrashin's corps is stationed. According to Army Gen. Pavel Grachev, he went there to resolve pressing social and everyday problems. The defense minister resolved a number of housing issues on the spot along with matters pertaining to the garrison's supply of food, clothing, and related gear. In conjunction with the district command it was decided to build a 450-bed sanatorium in Gelendzhik for Transbaykal Military District servicemen.

During his work among the troops the defense minister said that he often meets with servicemen and their families. The overwhelming majority of people in the Transbaykal are unequivocally of the view that the main thing for Russia now is stability, the inadmissibility of dramatic fluctuations and shifts in policy, and the consistent continuation of the transformations begun in the country. Today in their quest for voters various politicians are seeking ways to get to the military and countless attempts are being made to split the Army over politics. This cannot be permitted, Pavel Grachev stressed. The Army is and will remain the sole guarantor of calm and stability in society. That is our main task, Pavel Grachev noted. The minister also said that some mass media in the regions are in a number of instances presenting the population with a misrepresentation of the situation in the Army and shaping distorted public opinion about it, artificially belittling its spiritual potential. However, the Army has always supported and will continue to support the course of reform and the democratic transformations in Russia and will never side with those spreading discord and urging people to take to the barricades. We favor

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stability, and we will ensure it by virtue of our steadfast position, the Russian Federation defense minister said.

Summing up the results of his work in the Transbaykal Military District, the head of the Russian military department stressed that District Commander Colonel General Valeriy Tretyakov enjoys the unquestionable respect and prestige among all categories of troops in the district and is known in all garrisons, primarily those in remote areas. Army Gen. Pavel Grachev presented a large group of Borzinskiy Garrison officers with awards and said that he is pleased with the work in one of the Transbaykal region's most challenging garrisons in terms of climatic and natural conditions.

Russia: Grachev Arrives in Novosibirsk, Speaks on Elections

LD2405083596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0600 GMT 24 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Novosibirsk, 24 May (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defense Minister General Pavel Grachev today met with officers of the Novosibirsk Garrison. Grachev, who is continuing his tour of units, arrived in the Siberian Military District from the Transbaykal area on Thursday night. Addressing the Siberians, the minister said he "has a very favorable impression after his visit to the Urals and Transbaykal Military Districts."

The defense minister read out a statement to the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation signed on Thursday by President Boris Yeltsin. Commenting on the document, Pavel Grachev said: "This is your manual and your guidelines for future actions." He stressed in particular that it states for the first ever time at state level that Army reform is the affair of the state.

Speaking about elections, Grachev said steps forward must be taken and no recoil must take place. He said there is no alternative to Boris Yeltsin. Only Yeltsin is capable of leading the state forward. The minister stressed that the Army is doing everything to carry out the main task of the military reform — that is, to create a professional army.

Today, Pavel Grachev plans to fly to the Yurginskiy Garrison in Kemerovo Region. He is scheduled to visit the town of Berdsk near Novosibirsk, where he will view combat training of the units stationed there and will meet with their officers.

Russia: Commander Interviewed on Condition of Baltic Fleet, NATO

WS2305111096 Kaliningrad STRAZH BALTIKI in Russian 7 May 96 pp 1,2

[Interview with Russian Baltic Fleet Commander Admiral V. Yegorov by Captain 2d Rank V. Sikorskiy; place and date not given: "The Baltic Fleet: 293 Years of Service"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sikorskiy] **Summing up everything that has been said and written about the Baltic Fleet, one can draw a conclusion that its current condition is pretty complicated. One could even ask a question: Does Russia still have its navy in the Baltic Sea?**

[Yegorov] The reality is that the Baltic Fleet — it has just turned 293 years old — celebrates the anniversary of its founding in the place connected with the times of Peter the Great. He created the Russian Fleet in Kronshtadt and visited East Prussia. And now, we are based in those regions. After the Baltic republics gained independence, the situation in the Baltic Sea changed dramatically, which surely reflected on the Baltic Fleet activities. Let me cite just several very illustrative figures. After the pullout from the Baltic states, the Baltic Fleet lost 80 percent of its bases hosting half of our surface forces, all submarines, 30 percent of the airfields where one-fourth of all the fleet's aircraft were based, and 64 percent of ship repair and construction enterprises. These were huge losses, but the fleet survived. Beginning 1 June 1994, after we withdrew from six states, we started to bring the organizational and personnel structure in accordance with the fleet's reform plans. Since 1 January 1995, the fleet has a structure allowing it to implement tasks set by the Russian military doctrine while being financially the least burdensome for the state. Over the past 10 years, the fleet's personnel decreased by half, while the ship crew personnel shrank three-fold, currently numbering 126 ships and boats. The fleet's combat capabilities are similar to those of the German, Swedish, and Polish Navies, but, of course, lower than the potential of the Allied NATO Baltic Fleet. At the same time, the Baltic Fleet today is a universal formation that has combat-capable forces and a full range of combat tools, including the logistics and support systems. Politically, the presence of such naval forces in our region gives Russia the status of a strong Baltic state and confirms its ability to defend its interests in the sea.

Despite all the current hardships, combat training is progressing intensively and fruitfully. Last year, for example, the fleet won five awards in competitions for the prize of the Black Sea Fleet Commander —

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two more than in 1994. We have successfully carried out all planned rocket, artillery, and torpedo live-fire exercises, as well as mine laying and bombing exercises. All exercises received high grades during the first round, which speaks of high quality of our training activities. This tendency has not changed in this year. The winter training period was completed by a training voyage [sbor-pokhod] of more than 40 surface ships, 12 auxiliaries, and about 30 aircraft and helicopters. All combat exercises were conducted with mutual support. The voyage's culmination was the landing of sea and airborne units, consisting of more than 500 men, on the shore.

The high combat readiness of the fleet forces was confirmed by the participation of the patrol ship "Pylkiy" and tanker "Olekma" in the recent journey to the Mediterranean Sea along with a detachment of Russian ships. Crews of the both ships received the highest marks for their performance in that exercise. In March, the fleet was subjected to serious tests during the exercise code-named "Redut-96" that were conducted under the command of Army General M. Kolesnikov, chief of the General Staff.

There is another fact that I would like to underline. The Baltic Fleet is young — 75 percent of its ships are not older than 15 years, and all of them are in good condition. Those ships are supervised by excellent commanders. This is why I am sure that our fleet has a reliable future.

[Sikorskiy] Apart from military functions, the political role of the Baltic Fleet has recently grown significantly. In particular, its presence in the region is overshadowed by the behind-the-scenes games surrounding Kaliningrad Oblast. After all, you cannot rule out a prospect of NATO moving eastwards. Could you assess the importance of the fleet from this perspective?

[Yegorov] The role of the Baltic Fleet in upholding Russian national interests in the Baltic Sea is extremely important. It is an objective and a historically justified necessity, and one of the key requirements for our country's security, its economic development, and international prestige. This is the most important thing that naval sailors should remember all the time. Particularly so that some political forces abroad are continuing their attempts to move NATO's influence right to the Russian borders. Our country's leadership decisively opposes such attempts. After all, any Russian resident, especially servicemen, view the intention of expanding NATO very negatively. The Warsaw Pact is now defunct, and dramatic positive changes have taken place throughout the world, but the attempts to make an enemy out of Russia have not stopped. Here is what Boston daily CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR wrote: "The Western position toward Russians is very clear: You remain an enemy, and we will put you in military isolation. Various top Western officials send Moscow signals that, like it or not, NATO will expand by admitting former Soviet bloc members." A statement adopted at the session of the Assembly of North European and Baltic States devoted to collective security issues in the Baltic Sea region, which took place in November 1994 in Vilnius and was attended by a U.S. delegation, can be regarded as a "program" document. Among other things, it noted that the main "destabilizing factor in the region is a group of the Russian Baltic Fleet and land forces in Kaliningrad Oblast" which, in their opinion, exceeds the level of defensive sufficiency. Thus, the fact that Russian naval forces are stationed on the southeastern coast of the Baltic Sea is used by many politicians as a pretext for hastening the integration of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into NATO structures. Moreover, the alluring "peace-making" ideas to demilitarize the oblast serve to promote quite a concrete goal — to push the Russian fleet out of the Baltic Sea, strategically important to Russia, region into the freezing waters of Kronshtadt and St. Petersburg. This would inevitably weaken the Russian position in the Baltics, including the one concerning open-sea natural resources, the protection of fishing areas, and the development of the sea shelf.

Russia is now concentrating [its forces]. The former geopolitical romanticism that was endlessly enlarging the sphere of our vital interests, coupled with an attempt to copy the globalism of the West, is history. And it is naive to claim that pushing NATO Armed Forces up to the Russian border will enhance someone's security. On the contrary, this sort of action would undermine all attempts to strengthen stability on the European Continent. For our part, we do our best for normal peaceful processes to continue in the Baltic Sea zone. Hence the increased role, from the state's point of view, of the fleet as a stability factor. Our naval sailors strive to strengthen trust among the fleets of different countries. Mutual visits of combat ships, including to the naval base in Baltiysk, once closed to foreigners, serve this purpose. It was visited by naval ships from Great Britain, the United States, Denmark, and Germany. The joint naval exercises "Baltops" also promote the consolidation of relations and the reduction of tensions. This year, the Baltic Fleet will participate in them for the fourth time. Considering the fact that a record high number of naval ships from different countries (expected to reach 55) will participate in those maneuvers, one can state that such exercises are useful in terms of mutual exchange of experience and inter-

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personal relations. They will give a strong impetus to the development of trust — also among the navies of the Baltic states. The "Baltops" maneuvers will be attended, for example, by Lithuanian ships, two of which were transferred to that country from the Baltic Fleet. By the way, those who hurry to join NATO have no idea how much it will cost their national budgets. A transition alone to weapons conforming to common NATO standards will require hefty sums. And because there are no altruists in the modern world, the newly minted alliance members would have to back out of declarations by their current leaders. I am sure that we have an opportunity to continue building our relations in the new conditions based on mutual trust, and to peacefully untie all the knots of problems that we may encounter in the future.

[Sikorskiy] **In the past five years, territories where the Baltic Fleet was stationed underwent dramatic changes in the military, political, and economic spheres, which could not but affect the fleet itself. Given the fact that people who used to serve in the Baltic region were recently put at the helm of the Pacific Ocean and Black Sea Fleets, I would like to ask you the following: What should a fleet commander be like in our complicated times, when they are often confronted with, in fact, unresolvable problems?**

[Yegorov] The recently promoted admirals, V. Kravchenko [Black Sea Fleet commander] and V. Kuroyedov [Pacific Ocean Fleet commander], have done a lot to help our Navy survive in such complicated conditions. Here in the Baltics, they acquired extensive service experience which complemented their prior career path. We continue to work as friends, supporting each other and exchanging information over the phone. Today, a fleet commander at all levels must assume more responsibility than before. Everyone has to work hard, and there will be more of this work until the fleet is strengthened. Depending on the situation, one should act firmly or, on the contrary, be diplomatic. It is this flexibility that allowed us to preserve peace in the region when we were pulling out of the Baltic states. Officers and admirals who were there should take credit for that. They did very much to avoid what happened in Chechnya. In the Baltics, we left no material base for conducting warfare, taking from that region all military stocks, all weapons depots, and all material resources. Yes, there were provocations, but we resisted them and did not fire a single shot.

Today, we should bring many issues into conformity with reality and search for new methods of resolving problems after we have started to use our resources more frugally. In the past, the military did not count how much fuel or money was used because this was up to the highest state bodies. Now, life itself forces us to be more economical, to think much, and learn to count money even in the combat training process. I have already said that this difficult condition was brought about by the loss of ship repair facilities in the Baltic states. We have now only two repair facilities in Kronshtadt and Baltiysk. Of course, their capabilities are not sufficiently strong to compensate for the loss of such enterprises in Liepaya, Riga, and Tallinn. To tackle this problem, we use the experience that no other fleet in the world has. In places where the Soviet Navy used to carry out military service — in the Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and Indian Ocean — we had no naval bases. Our ships were repaired primarily in floating repair shops. The ships always return in good technical condition after six-month voyages. At present, we are incorporating this experience into our every-day activities. The combined capability of repair plants, floating repair shops, and coastal repair shops allow us to maintain 93 percent of our ships in full combat readiness. This is only one example, and there are many other problems. This is why all of us, each at his post, should work to make our fleet great and strong. All material resources that were entrusted to us — ships, aircraft, bases, command and communications systems, fleet enterprises — must be preserved and employed for the benefit of Russia. This also applies to the fleet personnel. In 1993-96, we managed to stabilize the situation with personnel at all levels. However, there is still one extremely acute problem. To strengthen the fleet, we need to provide thousands of officers and sailors with housing. Meanwhile, the fleet's powerful construction complex, capable of building 1,000 apartments annually, is sitting idle. Builders and MIS [expansion unknown] employees have not been paid since last January....

[Sikorskiy] **We are having this conversation on the eve of the 300th anniversary of the Russian Navy. You probably have something to say to those who serve today on the ships and in coastal units, navy veterans, and all those who care about its three-hundred-year-old traditions and the naval authority of Russia.**

[Yegorov] This year is not only a jubilee, but the time to think about the entire Russian history, which is closely intertwined with the history of the Russian Navy. The current difficult times unite all of us — both veterans and the young generation of sailors. For example, our submarine servicemen recently celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Russian Submarine Forces. More than 600 people gathered in St. Petersburg. The fleet's Council of Veterans has done a great job. Special thanks should go to N. Khromov, the retired rear

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admiral, whose name decorates the most shining pages of the Baltic Fleet's history. We receive much help from I. Alikov, another retired rear admiral, who is also chairman of the Foundation for Social Protection of Servicemen.

Traditions and names of Baltic servicemen who perished in the Great Patriotic War are invaluable for us. While paying tribute to them, we are seeking to restore justice toward those who were forgotten. Recently, V. Matiyasevich, commander of the submarine "Lembit," received the Hero of Russia title. I am sure that the same award will be given to relatives of the most effective Soviet submarine serviceman, P. Hryshchenko. Remembering them is our duty not only for them, but also for the fleet and history.

Economic Issues

Russia: Soskovets: Time for Economic Reforms To Bear Fruit

LD2305190896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1647 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets believes that the Russian economy is entering a stage of development when the economic reforms of the previous years are to bear fruit.

The accumulated experience of economic reforms and the financial stabilization achieved allow one to draw this conclusion, he said at a ceremony in Moscow on Thursday marking Chemist's Day. However, since the reforms have not been completed yet, the market cannot as yet resolve all the problems of the transition period, he said.

The state must stimulate production growth, accelerate investment policy, put inefficient enterprises out of use, strengthen economic integration in the Commonwealth of Independent States and support domestic producers, Soskovets said.

He said Russia's chemical, petrochemical and microbiological industries had increased production by 8 percent over the past year, while the profitability rate in the chemical and the petrochemical industries had risen by almost 30 percent.

Russia: Panskov Cited on Tax Collection Problems

MM2405083396 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 21 May 96

[Article by Igor Abramenko: "Russia's Tax Climate: Windy and Chilly. The Tax Organs' Humorous Slogan Is 'We Never Get Enough'" - - from the "Business Tuesday" section p 2]

[FBIS Translated Text] In general, everyone now is keen on collecting taxes: racketeers preparing for the summer vacation season and even persons of no fixed abode who, according to an IMA-PRESS report, have really mastered this variety of "business" to enhance their welfare. Only the government is unlucky. Meanwhile, a critical situation has been created: There is a shortfall of approximately 60 percent for all tax payments into the revenue part of the budget.

"The 1996 federal budget is being implemented badly," Vladimir Panskov, Russian Federation minister of finance, acknowledged the depressing first-quarter result. At the same time, according to him, tax arrears, which are progressing day by day and, as he put it, "growing at a simply catastrophic pace," are a particular headache for the government.

"As soon as the new year arrived, it was as though something happened. During the first three months of this year they increased by more than 50 percent and totaled 15.6 trillion rubles [R], whereas during the whole of last year they did not exceed the R20 trillion mark," the minister stated.

In his opinion, the present situation is in no way associated with a deterioration in the work of fiscal organs. "I do not believe that the tax service has started working worse in 1996 than in 1995. There has not been and could not have been a qualitative change to such a degree," he declared. Meanwhile, the conclusion that Mr. Panskov draws in this connection sounds implausibly reassuring: The disorder with regard to implementing the federal budget is directly dependent on seasonal variations. Thus, the Russian Federation Ministry of Finance took credits in the sum of R1.3 trillion from commercial banks to make advance payments for gold extraction. "We are perfectly well aware that this is not the best way out, but we have been forced to do this in connection with the seasonal nature of expenditure and the seasonal nature of revenue," the minister declared.

In the opinion of the minister of finance, two main problems now exist in this sphere: tax arrears and tax evasion in the "shadow economy," when firms operate but render sham returns, mainly making cash transactions. "I do not rule out the possibility that some enterprises are actively concealing money with a view to the election results. Particularly as it is not very difficult to do so: The fact that every enterprise has multiple accounts makes it possible to do this in a technically clean way," Panskov declared.

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This assertion of his is confirmed by quite specific figures. According to the data of the State Customs Committee and the State Committee for Statistics, there was a steep increase — by 24 percent — in the growth in export volumes in April. Commenting on this indicator, Yuriy Yurkov, chairman of the Russian Federation State Committee for Statistics, declared that he does not rule out the influence of the factor of the upcoming election and the possible outflow of finances from the country in the form of goods, the proceeds from whose sale abroad do not return to Russia.

Vladimir Panskov reported that for the purpose of ensuring greater control over financial flows his department prepared a draft presidential edict under which every enterprise, when maintaining multiple bank accounts, must have one account for transactions with suppliers and the tax inspectorate. According to the head of the Ministry of Finance, however, the Central Bank's leadership was categorically opposed. Sergey Dubinin, in particular, declared: "We do not need any innovations, but the controlling organs must work better."

Nevertheless, there will most likely be innovations in the tax sphere. At any rate, the group of experts who prepared the analytical memorandum for Russian entrepreneurs "Russia's Tax Climate: Forecast for 1996" does not rule out the possibility of such a development of events.

In the opinion of the authors of that study, the current tax climate in Russia is being shaped under the influence of two trends. On the one hand a certain liberalization of tax legislation, and on the other a substantial toughening of the fiscal organs' stance against violators. Even though there is every reason to assume that these trends will persist over the next few months, at least until the presidential election, the opposite cannot be ruled out either.

This is all the more likely because one of the tax documents that is expected to be adopted in the next few months is the Tax Code, the draft of which is now being discussed actively in the lobbies of parliament. Its first — "general" — part was adopted by the State Duma back at the end of last year, and work on the second — "special" — part was to have been completed in the first quarter. The consequences of the adoption of this document, particularly with regard to the political situation in the country, are expected to be very extensive. Particularly as the situation that has taken shape with regard to tax collection could additionally provoke the government, even before the election, into adopting some changes in the fiscal sphere.

It is primarily a question of introducing a steeper (in all senses) progressive scale of taxation of high incomes for individuals. But another way strikes the experts as being more reliable, in the sense of the collectibility of taxes: the restoration of wage normatives for enterprises and also the levying of an additional tax on enterprises' profits on above-normative wages.

As the experts point out, the chances of such measures being taken to save the budget are very high.

Russia: Business People Holding On Until After Election

MM2305134896 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 23 May 96 p 2

[Report by Anatoliy Melnikov: "Mild Panic Across the Counter. Businessmen Instantly Recall Lost Habits of Trading Under the Counter"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Turnover at firms trading at the former Exhibition of National Economic Achievements, now the All-Russia Exhibition Center, pavilions is falling. Businessmen reassure one another by saying that sales always drop off somewhat in the summer. In actual fact the expectation of the presidential election is what is setting trade in turmoil.

"We have no trading problems and are hardly going to have any. Because the wholesalers who supply us have plenty of goods at the moment," Yevgeniy Sidorov, deputy director of ETM [expansion unknown], said. "Everything is fine for us," Gennadiy Blokhin, head of KIT's [expansion unknown] sales department, echoed his colleague's words. "No matter who comes to power, nothing will change. We are not even afraid of the Communists. I myself was a rank-and-file Communist for 24 years. I got nothing but good from the party. I now have a Danish ice box at home and I used to have a Zil. I would make do with a Zil again as long as things are calm in the country. Whom will I vote for? ...Yeltsin."

People prefer not to think about the election results and their resulting business prospects. Everything will be fine. The wheels have been "set in motion."

"Who is going to tell you anything now?" one salesman, who asked to remain anonymous, summed up the result of the "favorable poll." "The bulk of the businessmen at the national Exhibition Center have incomes that do not run into tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many will remain in the country even in the worst-case scenario. Since things will obviously not be better if the Communists or Zhirinovskiy come to power, it is not ruled out that they will become the very 'enemies' who 'looted and tore the country asunder.' What are people saying? Will they be allowed to work? Who then will be 'dekulakized,' where will the money come from to pay

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wages and pensions? What then do they intend to sell? I can assume from our firm's business that Matsushita Electric has already somewhat cut back on deliveries of costly audio equipment. Some other firms which supply our market are also cautiously awaiting the election result. If the 'wrong' people come to power, they will stop deliveries, and that is all there is to it."

"I specialize in the banal business of fire alarm installation," Sergey Abramov, salesman for Oskol Limited, said. "If the Communists win, I will still be fitting these alarms. I hope not to die of hunger."

One salesman recalled the ancient profession of "black marketeer." "I remember that they used to be held in respect; people sought them out, abased themselves, and haggled with them. My comrades and I need to revive this ancient, popular trade. I hope to see the new true Communists among my clients. In the area where we work there will once again be an exhibition of achievements in some incomprehensible activity which has no bearing on real life. And the normal good things of life and equipment will once again be supplied either via distributors or black marketeers."

"Virtually nothing is changing in Moscow ahead of the election," Vasiliy Lysenko, a buyer from Krasnodar, said, "probably because most of the country's money is concentrated here. There is less money in Krasnodar. That is why the situation there is different. Enterprises that owe money prefer not to pay up. And they are not ashamed to give the following explanation: 'Do not expect the money before 16 June. If Yeltsin stays in power, we will pay up. If Zyuganov comes to power, you may not need the money.'" People are converting the money into dollars. We have already experienced a situation whereby the Communists threaten to change dollars for rubles at the rate of one to 500. It was when the official dollar exchange rate was 60 kopeks and they were bought at "five rubles" or more.

Russia: Coal Trade Union: Moscow Owes Industry 1.1 Trillion Rubles

LD2305123196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1155 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 23 (Interfax) — The debt of the Russian federal budget on state support to the coal industry was 1.1 trillion rubles as of May 20, deputy chairman of the trade union of coal industry workers (Rosugleprofsoyuz) Ruben Badalov told Interfax Thursday [23 May].

Partial payments for May were started only several days ago whereas the wage to Russian miners is delayed "on average by two months." These delays exceed three months in several regions, in particular, in Yakutia, Sakhalin and the Rostov region, Badalov said. Mine construction workers who have not received their wage for six to seven months are "in a worse state."

The share of the federal budget in the wage debt to coal industry workers totals only 250 billion rubles out of the total sum of 1.5 trillion rubles, Badalov said. Most of this accrued due to non-payments on the part of coal consumers.

Nevertheless, "a serious dissatisfaction with the federal authorities is ripening" in Russia's coal producing regions, he said. In particular, participants of the recent Rostov regional conference of Rosugleprofsoyuz decided to call all miners not to support Boris Yeltsin at the upcoming presidential elections but to vote for any other candidate.

The Russia's Miners public political movement will determine its official position at its congress scheduled for early June in Moscow, Badalov said.

Russia: Farmers Call For Tax Breaks, State Support

MM2305133096 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 23 May 96 p 3

[Unattributed extract "From the Resolution of the All-Russia Conference of Rural Commodity Producers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] ...Reforms in the countryside are proceeding amid a crisis caused by both old, previously unresolved problems and by the generally grave situation in the country's whole economy.

The disparity in the prices of agricultural and industrial output has intensified. A peasant can now buy several times less in terms of industrial production resources in return for a unit of agricultural output than five years ago. Capital investments in the agrarian sphere have fallen significantly, the marketability of many types of output has dropped, and the majority of other indicators characterizing the agrarian economy have deteriorated.

The decline in production in the agrarian sector has not stopped. In 1995 the farm performance indicators (productivity, milk yield, weight gains) and the number of livestock and poultry continued to fall. Less fertilizer is now being used, the machinery and tractor pool is aging, and there is an obvious shortage of fuel and lubricants. As a result, gross agricultural output has fallen by 33 percent as compared with 1990. Wages in the countryside are lower than in any other sector of the economy.

With a view to stabilizing the economic situation in the Russian Federation agro-industrial complex and continuing to intensify agrarian reform..., the implementation

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of the Russian Federation President's Edict "On Measures to Stabilize the Economic Situation and Develop Reform in the Agro-Industrial Complex" and the Russian Federation Government Decree "On Measures to Stabilize the Economic Situation in the Russian Federation Agro-Industrial Complex in 1996" as well as the Federal Law "On Purchases and Supplies of Agricultural Output, Raw Materials, and Food for State Needs" must be ensured.

The development of cooperative relations in the agro-industrial complex must be promoted, and support for the creation of processing, agricultural service, credit, and other types of cooperatives by agricultural commodity producers must be strengthened by exempting them, as well as the rural commodity producers themselves, from tax on profit. The controlling blocks of shares in processing and agricultural service enterprises are to be handed over to the rural commodity producers.

Help should be given in reforming economically poor and loss-making farms, reorganizing them, and using them to set up efficient economic structures and peasant (private) farms.

The full financial resources for the needs of the agro-industrial complex envisaged in the federal and local budgets for 1996 must be allocated in a timely fashion, and their targeted use must be ensured.

Commodity credit for the supply of fuel and lubricants, mineral fertilizers, and plant protection agents, and leasing operations for acquiring machinery and equipment must continue to be developed. A system for the short-term and long-term crediting and insurance of rural commodity producers is to be created. The protection of domestic commodity producers against the expansion of imported food must be ensured.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: Udovenko Praises Positive Aspects of Relations With EU

LD2205201296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1509 GMT 22 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 22 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The permanent and dynamic character of bilateral dialogue between Ukraine and the European Union leaves a positive impact upon the deepening of economic cooperation, establishment of active relations and in other fields of mutual interests.

This was pointed out at the talks between Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko in Rome yesterday May 21 with his colleagues from the troika of the European Union (Italy, Spain and Ireland), Interfax - Ukraine has been told at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry press-center.

The talks were also attended by Hans van den Broek of the European Commission for Foreign Policy.

The sides have highly appreciated the outcome of the second meeting of the EU-Ukraine joint committee, which was in session in the Ukrainian capital on May 6-7, indicating its orientation to gradual expansion of cooperation in trade and economy as well as cooperation in science and technology, and to further development of the legal-contractual basis for relations between Ukraine and the European Union.

H. Udovenko has informed the EU representatives about the present-day political and economic situation in Ukraine, about the pace of the constitutional process and positive results of macro-economic stabilization.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister stressed the need for the speediest ratification by EU parliaments of the partnership and cooperation agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, as well as the need for granting financial aid to Ukraine and compliance by the European Union with agreements on that issue.

It has also been pointed out that granting Ukraine the status of a state with transitional economy moving towards a free market, extension to Ukraine-made commodities of EU preferences and specific assistance to Ukraine in her accession to the World Trade Organization would be a real manifestation of support by the EU for the integration of our state into the international economic system.

The two sides have also discussed topical issues of European security, in particular, NATO's expansion, the situation in former Yugoslavia, as well as the state of cooperation between Ukraine and Russia and other CIS member countries.

Ukraine: Kuchma: Ukraine Seeks Admission to European Structures

LD2405102096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0928 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 24 (Interfax-Ukraine) — Slowly but surely Ukraine will be joining European structures, including the Western European Union, President Leonid Kuchma told British Ambassador to the WEU John Goulden Friday in Kiev.

The WEU and Europe as a whole are anxious to hear Kuchma's address to the Union's Parliamentary Assembly, scheduled to take place in Paris on June 5, Kuchma's press secretary Dmitry Markov cited Goulden as saying in reply.

Britain intends to offer more aid to reform-oriented Ukraine, Goulden also said. An emissary of one of the leading British banks will be expected to visit Kiev next month.

Consistent tax policies and accelerated privatization will boost investment in the Ukrainian economy, Goulden told Kuchma.

Ukraine: NATO Admiral Does Not Rule Out Ukraine Joining NATO

LD2305211296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1955 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SEVASTOPOL, May 23 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Commander of the Unified NATO Navies in Southern Europe Admiral Mario Angeli does not rule out the possibility of Kiev's entry into the North Atlantic Alliance in future.

Speaking in Sevastopol on Wednesday, the admiral praised Ukrainian seamen he met in the Black and Mediterranean Seas saying their performance met the requirements set by "modern fleets." He believes the Ukrainian warships could take part in peacekeeping operations in future.

Angeli said the Ukrainian navy could be helped within the framework of the NATO-sponsored Partnership plan.

He also voiced interest in cooperating with Russia's Black Sea Fleet following Moscow's acceptance of the plan.

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Ukraine: Chernomyrdin Meets Kuchma, Marchuk, Other Officials

LD2305163896 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1500 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma today met Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who is staying in Ukraine on a two-day visit. They discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral relations. There was also a long meeting between Viktor Chernomyrdin and Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk. During the visit there were also talks in bilateral working groups with the participation of Ukrainian and Russian Government officials, the military, and experts. They discussed the Black Sea Fleet, compensation for nuclear ammunition, the restructuring of the debts, and trade and economic cooperation.

Ukraine: Crimea Seeks Control Over Russian TV Transmissions

LD2305220296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1620 GMT 23 May 96

[By unidentified ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Simferopol, 23 May — The constant breaking of Russian Public Television programs, transmitted from Moscow, with broadcasts of Ukrainian television and advertisment blocs of the local television and radio company "not only intensifies social tensions in the Crimea but can be a serious threat to the republic's income from tourism of CIS citizens, who need to watch information programs of the Russian television."

The Crimean parliament adopted this resolution in response to the instruction of the management of the Ukrainian state television and radio company, according to which the Russian Public Television broadcasts were re-routed directly via the central control room in Kiev, making it possible to interrupt transmissions at any time.

The Crimean parliament told the government that it must release funds as soon as possible to set up an alternative republican television company and to ensure payments for the transmission of the Russian Public Television broadcasts through this company. It also instructed the government to conclude a contract with the Russian Public Television on granting the Crimean television exclusive rights to transmit its programs.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Kiev Agrees to Russian Fleet Base in Sevastopol

LD2405101496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0927 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SEVASTOPOL, May 24 (Interfax) — Ukraine has agreed to have a base of the Russian Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol on certain conditions and for a certain period, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk told a news conference in Sevastopol Friday [24 May].

Almost all issues related to the Black Sea fleet have been discussed at interstate negotiations with Russia, he said. The rest of the work to be done on the Black Sea fleet "will be routine, not very romantic, with a pencil and a map in our hands," said Marchuk.

Asked whether Sevastopol will remain a city of Russian naval glory, he said Sevastopol is a city subordinated to the central authorities in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution. Marchuk thinks that Sevastopol is a city of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian glory, "a glory of our peoples."

The Ukrainian prime minister arrived in Sevastopol Friday. He had an hour-long meeting with Commander of the Black Sea Fleet Viktor Kravchenko and Ukrainian Navy Commander Vladimir Bezkorovainy at the administrative building of the Belbek air field. The sides discussed the functioning of the Black Sea fleet and the Ukrainian Navy and their bilateral relations.

Marchuk said that as the goals of his visit to Sevastopol he wanted to solve local problems, including the state of the local economy, the water supply and sewage systems, render financial and material support to the city, and take a look at the military facilities.

Ukraine: Marchuk: Power Structures 'Should be Replaced'

LD2305165196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0840 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev [no date as received] — All power structures in Ukraine "should be replaced" following the adoption of the Ukrainian Constitution, this being done not overnight of course, but in line with the procedure envisaged by the Constitution itself, Ukraine's Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk has told correspondents.

He said the power structures should be replaced in an order of priority that would "prevent chaos in the managerial sphere." He said "the Constitution is a

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milestone that marks a beginning of a new state and the managerial sphere should be adjusted to match the fundamental law."

Assessing, at UNIAN's request, the draft constitution's article on the government, Marchuk said that the government's functions, as they are described in the draft prepared by the provisional ad hoc commission, "are more or less acceptable." He said "if the Constitution was drafted by the constitutional assembly or any other structure that would know that it will leave the political scene once the Constitution is written, and if no one was adjusting the Constitution to their own needs, I think, the document could be of a much higher quality."

Ukraine: Marchuk May Be Replaced Due To Opposition to Referendum

WS2405081596 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0114 GMT 24 May 96

[By Oksana Hasyuk, INTELNEWS Staff Writer]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 24 — As rumors surfaced concerning his imminent replacement, Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk declared himself in opposition to President Leonid Kuchma's call for a nationwide referendum to ratify a new constitution.

"Marchuk will not occupy his office in two weeks," a Kuchma administration source told INTELNEWS on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Marchuk was widely quoted by Ukrainian media as saying that the referendum would cost too much money and that parliamentary ratification of a new constitution to replace the one Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union would be a better alternative. According to some estimates, it would cost more than KBV30 trillion ($162 million) to conduct the vote — a sum many say the country can ill-afford as it struggles to pay workers and balance its budget.

But Kuchma refuted this logic in a meeting earlier this week with Ternopil oblast leaders.

"Do not be afraid of a referendum," he said. "There is no reason to count money in this business." said Kuchma.

In a related development, leftists in Parliament complicated prospects for parliamentary ratification of the constitution by refusing to register for Thursday's start of its first reading consideration. The three boycotting factions included the Communists, Parliament's largest group.

Ukraine: Finance Minister Accused of 'Complicity' in Scandal

WS2405082596 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0114 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 23 — Finance Minister Petro Hermanchuk came under political fire Thursday, with 51 members of Parliament formally accusing him of complicity in a scandal involving misuse of a $75 million agricultural aid grant.

In a letter written to President Leonid Kuchma, the deputies said the scandal was only part of a pattern involving widespread use of funds by top state officials.

"Thousands of millions of dollars are being used... for personal enrichment, which is impossible without the assistance and direct complicity of key officials," the letter states.

"Only by the above we can explain the unanimous decision of Finance Minister Petro Hermanchuk allowing the commercial structure Zmlya y Ludy (Land and People), on the request of its president, (First Deputy Parliament Speaker) Oleksandr Tkachenko not to return to the state the 'borrowed' $75 million until the year 2000."

Land and People, according to the charges, is doing its utmost to avoid responsibility for illicit activity, seeking to obtain high-level support in its efforts to postpone prosecution. The letter states that Tkachenko has succeeded, with Hermanchuk's help, in delaying his trial on charges resulting from the scandal until the year 2001.

According to the deputies, Hermanchuk, in allowing the postponement, violated a Finance Ministry regulations requiring a finance minister to protect state financial interests and prohibiting him from postponing repayment of government-secured credits.

Ukraine: 31 Mines on Strike; Kuchma Orders Payment of Wage Arrears

LD2305215996 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in 1800 GMT 23 May 96

[No video available]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Coal Industry Ministry reports that employees of 31 mines were on strike this morning in Ukraine, protesting against delays in the payment of wages. The losses in coal production over the past 24 hours have reached over 35,000 tonnes. The president's press service reports that Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma issued an order today that measures should be taken to pay the wage arrears to miners.

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Ukraine: Crimean Democratic Party Calls For Constituent Assembly

MK2305125096 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 May 96 p 3

[NEGA report: "Crimea"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, the [Crimean] Democratic Party made public a document saying that a Constituent Assembly of Crimea needs to be convened in order to adopt a Crimean Constitution. Representatives of the party believe that the election to the Constituent Assembly, which will include 200-300 delegates, can be held this summer.

In the opinion of representatives of the Democratic Party of Crimea, if a Constituent Assembly is created, the Supreme Council of the republic will be able to "set to the preparation and the adoption of laws and decrees aimed at the solution of economic and social problems." Thus, the adoption of a Crimean Constitution by the Constituent Assembly will ensure the inviolability of the Fundamental Law for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

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Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka: Rapprochement With Russia Becoming Irreversible

LD2305191596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1525 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovaleva, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rapprochement between Russia, Belarus and other former Soviet republics are becoming irreversible, Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka told the fifth international cinema festival of Slavic and Orthodox peoples Gold Knight which will officially open in Minsk Friday.

"This is the will of our peoples," Lukashenka stated.

A new voluntary association of the former Soviet republics is already taking shape after "extremely important documents" defining the principles and guidelines of further integration and rapprochement were signed by the Russian and Belarusian leaders in Moscow in early April, Lukashenka said.

"Despite the breakup of a great power, the former Soviet Union, our peoples are still united by the unshakable intention to live in friendship, help each other, create history and solve problems together," he said.

This festival is a bright example of the fact that "we keep the sacred memory of our ancestors, develop their elevated ambitions, remember our great history, its bright and tragic pages, do our best to prevent the black shadow of strife and discord from covering the idea of brotherhood, cooperation and unification," he said.

IF Note: The festival is timed to the Days of Slavic Culture and Alphabet. Cinematographists from 19 countries of the world will be showing over 150 dramas, documentaries and clips for 10 days of the festival.

Belarus: Economic Cooperation Discussed With Moldovan Delegation

WS2305121496 Minsk RESPUBLIKA in Russian 22 May 96 p 3

[Report by Viktar Sakhankow: "Trade and Economic Ties Promise To Strengthen"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The implementation of agreements concluded as a result of Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's visit to Moldova last September is continuing. A governmental delegation headed by Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Ion Gucu arrived in our country on 20 May.**

The guests attended a meeting of the Belarusian-Moldovan Commission for Issues of Trade and Economic Cooperation. On 21 May, Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir held talks with the Moldovan governmental delegation, during which the results of trade and economic cooperation in 1995 and measures aimed at its further development were discussed. Also discussed during the meeting were draft agreements on this year's trade and economic cooperation and a protocol on exceptions to free trade regulations concerning a corresponding agreement between the two countries. The Belarusian government leader also discussed issues concerning cooperation in production and draft documents concerning cooperation and mutual protection of investments.

Belarus: Agreement Signed With Ford on Joint Vehicle Production

WS2305133996 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1200 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ford Motor Company, the Belarusian Government, and the Lada OMC company signed an agreement on 23 May on establishing a joint enterprise for producing automobiles. The new Ford Union company will produce the popular models — Ford Transit and Ford Escort. The first initial joint investments into the company which will be located in the Minsk Oblast village of Abchak will amount to $20 million. According to Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir, the implementation of this project will allow Belarus to produces 5,000 new automobiles as early as 1997.

Belarus: Foreign Policy Concept Reviewed

WS2405101096 Minsk BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 May 96 p 5

[Article attributed to BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA Information Department: "Despite the President's Statements, There Are a Few Priorities"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The word "pragmatism" has recently been used in an official document for the first time ever during Alyaksandr Lukashenka's term of office, although the first Belarusian president once called his election team a "team of pragmatists." The "long-suffering" Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Belarus, which was drafted over a year ago, but approved by the Cabinet of Ministers only quite recently, is the document.**

The developers of the concept proceeded from the fact that current international relations are characterized by fundamental political and socioeconomic changes connected with the emergence of new independent

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states, the disappearance of the bipolar structure of world balance of influence, the development of regional centripetal tendencies, and the transition from global division to cooperation based on international law.

The following foreign policy activities have been singled out as the main tasks: strengthening Belarus' sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity; increasing security and providing international guarantees to maintain a nonnuclear and neutral status; ensuring and implementing basic human rights and freedoms; creating favorable external conditions for the establishment of a social market economy and integration of our country as an equal member and partner into the common European and world economic systems; protecting the rights and interests of Belarusian citizens abroad, establishing close ties with the Belarusian community living abroad, etc.

However, nobody would currently dare to claim that these provisions of the concept will not be changed during the procedure to approve it by the Belarusian president. So, in light of the new military and political agreements with Russia, our state's nonnuclear status seems to be doubtful. It is also very disputable whether the Belarusian leader will give the Foreign Ministry a "green light" to enhance ties with the Belarusian community living abroad or, for example, whether he will uphold international standards regarding approaches to the observance of human rights in our country. Nevertheless, the premises are good.

As for the issue of bilateral relations, attitudes differ with regard to various countries.

As for neighboring states, the idea of creating a "belt of good- neighborliness" around Belarus has been voiced. Deepening integration processes and expanding bilateral relations with CIS countries are defined as the regional priorities of Belarusian foreign policy.

The utmost development of the CIS, its efficient transformation into a full-fledged universal regional organization with a constantly growing level of economic integration and political cooperation are the area of Belarus' special interests. It has been noted that pace, contents, and directions of relations within the CIS are determined by the real situation of the Belarusian economy, taking into account the fact that the economic systems of CIS member states highly complement one another. It is emphasized that Belarus attaches primary importance to the development of versatile relations with the Russian Federation. True, according to the concept, we should strive for closer interaction with Russia only with regard to the implementation of social transformations. The Belarusian president will hardly like this provision, despite the fact that after six months of coordinating the document with the Security Council, it is hard to claim that it does not fully conform to our state's interests.

As the concept confirms, the European continent is a key and fundamentally important area of foreign policy. Further, however, there are more "incongruities" with the policy conducted by the Belarusian leader. As the main goal of Belarus' European policy, the diplomats have specified our country's active participation in common European affairs, the establishment of a common European security system, and our state's more rapid and harmonious accession to the international community. At the same time, the stance of our head of state on these issues is well known: "Not the Council of Europe for Belarus, but Belarus for the Council of Europe," "No to NATO's eastward expansion," and so on. Thus, certain corrections may be made with regard to our state's European policy, in the political aspect.

A key role in creating a well-balanced system of cooperation between Belarus and West Europe is reserved for the development of bilateral relations with Great Britain, Germany, and France. Although a whole paragraph is devoted to relations with the United States, it includes only one brief sentence: *"The Republic of Belarus will actively expand versatile political and economic cooperation with the United States."* The attention to the North American region is confined to this one sentence.

Despite Alyaksandr Lukashenka's repeated statements that priority will be given only to one state — Russia — the concept defines other foreign policy priorities. In particular, it is a priority to elevate to a qualitatively new level cooperation with countries from Latin America, Africa, and the Asian-Pacific region, because closer cooperation with countries from these regions on new problems of international life — disarmament, environment, broader possibilities of trade and economic exchange — conforms to the interests of our state. It is also noted that it is necessary to take advantage of the existing preconditions for the development of deeper and mutually beneficial economic cooperation with Asian countries, particularly China, Japan, and India. To put it briefly, it is a multidirectional policy.

With regard to issues of international cooperation and participation in a system of international security, the diplomats are very reserved. They point to the fact that the negative experience of years-long conflicts in the Balkans, Near East, and a number of other regions of the former USSR has exposed the entire criticallity of the problem of creating a new reliable system of ensuring international security, preventing and settling conflicts in a timely manner, and preventing them from developing into local wars. *"An analysis of methods and means of preventing new threats to international security*

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makes one conclude that it is currently impossible for an individual state to ensure its security with its own forces alone," the document adds. *"Proceeding from this, as well as being convinced of the unproductiveness of any attempts to build its own security on the lack of security of others, the Republic of Belarus joined the "Partnership for Peace" program, and has met all its commitments concerning the collective security of CIS countries."*

There is no talk about any military-political union with Russia. The document does not reject the North Atlantic bloc either. Moreover, it is pointed out that Belarus does not consider any state as a military enemy, and will develop partnership with the largest military states of the world, particularly with Russia, the United States, China, Germany, Great Britain, and France, as well as with such international organizations as NATO, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the West European Union, and the CIS. It is particularly emphasized that Belarus has been, and will exert efforts to meet its commitments concerning the planned destruction of weapons according to previously signed agreements, and will conduct radical reductions and reforms of the Armed Forces.

No matter how grotesque the following statement may seem in the current situation, it is included in the concept anyway: *"Quicker accession to the Council of Europe is one of the main directions of European foreign policy. Accession to the Council of Europe's open conventions, as well as unification and adjustment of domestic law by bringing it in line with international standards in the area of human rights, will contribute to achieving this task."*

As for other international organizations, particular importance is attached to the UN. Within the limits defined by the Constitution, the Republic of Belarus is going to make its contribution to peacekeeping activities under the aegis of the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the CIS (by the way, the Constitution does not include a ban on military service outside the country's borders; this provision is secured by an appropriate law). Instead, our country's Basic Law contains Article 59: *"The state is obliged to take all available measures to preserve domestic and international order which is essential for the full implementation of citizens' rights and freedoms envisioned in the Constitution."* Along with the well known Paragraph 1 of Article 100: *"The president takes measures aimed at protection of sovereignty, national security, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Belarus, achievement of political and economic stability, and observance of citizens' rights and freedoms"* — this sounds very promising. "In case something happens," no document will help.

Belarus: Lukashenka Deplores Lack of Soviet Propaganda Machine

LD2405095396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0906 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, May 24 (Interfax-West) — Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka sees poor ideological content as his biggest headache in domestic policy and deplores the lack of powerful propaganda mechanisms such as those which existed under Soviet rule.

The president has neither a strong press service nor a strong press secretary, Lukashenka said Thursday in Minsk. "Belarus has a desperate need for highly qualified journalists who would be fully loyal to their motherland," Lukashenka said.

The executive branch of power is also facing a personnel problem, Lukashenka said. It needs specialists who would be "sincerely devoted to their work and would not rush into politics."

It is up to his administration to engage in politics, Lukashenka said.

Lukashenka's said Belarus has coped with inflation. Last month's inflation rate stood at 1.5 percent. But more goods remain unsold and the balance of foreign trade payments is negative, Lukashenka said.

Industrial production is becoming less profitable and investment in the national economy is low, he added.

Belarus: Former Minister Accuses Lukashenka of High Crimes

MK2405050796 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 23 May 96 p 8

[Report by Sergey Anisko: "Belarus President Accused of Violating Law"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A sensational interview given by Belarus's former minister of internal affairs, Yuriy Zakharenko, to independent mass media outlets of the republic literally produced shock among the presidential structures and sparked a broad reaction in society. This is the first case in Belarus's history where a former statesman openly accused the president of many sins.

In October 1995, Yuriy Zakharenko was removed from his position "for violating financial discipline and his inability to bring down the crime rate." The true reason for firing the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] head was his independence. His colleagues argue that

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fundamental for him — a former investigation worker — was the letter of the law, rather than political expediency and devotion to the top man. After his dismissal, Yuriy Zakharenko made an attempt to run for parliament. However, the leadership of the local executive committee in the Gomel electoral district, acting on instructions from the top, did its utmost to prevent him from becoming the people's choice. The former minister tried to achieve political rehabilitation using a parliamentary platform. At the time the Supreme Council was approving the new minister of internal affairs; it was decided — despite opposition from deputies loyal to the president — by a majority of votes to give the floor to his predecessor.

In his address, Mr. Zakharenko denied all charges of the violation of financial discipline and a low level of professionalism. He brought to the attention of the deputies information concerning connections by persons from among Alyaksandr Lukashenka's entourage with the Chechen mafia in Belarus, and he revealed some nuances of personnel appointments to top leadership positions in the republic, which are carried out on the basis of personal loyalty rather than on the basis of professional competence. However, a majority of the members of the Communist faction and the Agrarians absolutely did not care either for the future of the ex-minister or for the revelations he made, and they all voted for the candidacy of Valentin Agolets, who was proposed by the president as a successor to Yuriy Zakharenko.

Realizing that the news blackout against him would continue, the disgraced minister decided to give an interview to some independent media. With the directness typical of him, he accused the president of direct violations of a number of articles in the country's criminal code. In particular, in the view of Mr. Zakharenko, Alyaksandr Lukashenka can be brought to account for his failure to fulfill constitutional norms, abuse of authority, and excess of power. He accuses the president of the unlawful banning of free trade unions' activity and infringement on the right of citizens to criticize the authorities. The expulsion of some newspapers from the republic's territory, the dissemination of false information, and the use of unlawful means in the course of the presidential elections extend the list of Lukashenka's sins.

Nor did Yuriy Zakharenko pass over the "Torgekspo" firm, which the Belarusian leader exempted, in violation of the law, from tax. He also made public facts concerning the embezzlement of public money that went on without any control for the refurbishment the presidential residence, the creation of a powerful "docile" [karmannaya] special service, and the purchase of costly cars and planes.

Mr. Zakharenko spoke of the Belarus leader's personal qualities as follows: "He is hot-tempered and will not stomach alongside him educated, cultured people who have their own views. With a more powerful person, or with someone he needs, he is extremely dependent and friendly to the point of personal humiliation ....[He is] capable of deception and shady enterprise for the sake of reaching his vain goals. The absence of analytical thinking [on his part] is compensated by obtuse assertiveness."

In winding up the interview, Yuriy Zakharenko stated: "Today I have ended up in isolation.... Everybody is afraid of His ire. [capital 'His' as published] But if the malicious insults on the part of Lukashenka do not stop — and there is no one in the country to protect me from his high-handedness — I am going to find a method to protect my dignity as an officer and a human being."

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Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan: Military on 'Heightened Alert' on Border With Tajikistan

LD2205135596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1255 GMT 22 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bishkek, 22 May — The military units of the Kyrgyz Defense Ministry deployed in the area of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border have been put on heightened alert. This was the reaction of the military to yesterday's attack by a group of the Tajik opposition on the Interior Ministry checkpoint in Jirgatal district of Tajikistan. As a result of that attack two militiamen were killed and four taken hostage.

As reported today by VECHERNIY BISHKEK, citing sources at the Kyrgyz Defense Ministry in connection with the situation that had arisen in that area bordering Kyrgyzstan, readiness number one was declared in the military unit stationed in Gulch-Alayskiy district in Osh region and in the Osh motor-rifle brigade. The military recruitment office has started a mobilization campaign. A group of officers from the Kyrgyz Defense Ministry flew out to study the situation in the south of the republic.

Kyrgyzstan: Customs Posts To Be Removed on Kazakh Border

LD2405084196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0650 GMT 24 May 96

[By Alisher Niyazov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BISHKEK, May 24 (Itar-Tass) — A ceremony of removing customs posts will be held at a section of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border on Friday [24 May]. Itar-Tass learnt at the press service of the Kyrgyz government that a removal of customs houses on the border between the two states will be another step to implement the Moscow understandings between the member countries of the quadripartite Customs Union (Eds: the understandings reached between Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan provide for removing customs houses between the four countries).

Premiers Akezhan Kazhegeldin and Apas Dzhumagulov will head government delegations of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at the ceremony. They will participate in a symbolic action: tree-planting in the place of dismantled customs points not far from the Kyrgyz village of Georgievka.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Tajikistan-Afghanistan Border Units Still on Combat Alert

MM2305160696 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 23 May 96 p 2

["Report from Tajikistan" by Viktor Sokirko: "Blood-Red Poppies..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] Poppies are now in flower all over the Pamirs and the mountain slopes are a riot of red. But there is no one to admire this beauty, and the vast areas of poppies only conjure up associations with spots of blood, to which people have long been accustomed here. The war in the mountains on the Tajik- Afghan border has been under way for umpteen years now, and no one confuses gun salvos with landslips or rock falls.

The fiercest fighting in Gornyy Badakhshan was last year, when Afghan mojahedin and Tajik gunmen attempted to dislodge border guards from units in the Khorog and Kalay-Khumb detachments' sectors. Then 46 enlisted men and officers died on the border and the gunmen's losses ran into hundreds. Since then the border guards have dug in and obtained tank and artillery reinforcements. The status quo has been restored, but shooting on the border has been equally intense. As predicted, this May, when the snow in the mountain passes melted, was the time for another guerrilla offensive.

"To date around 2,000 mojahedin are massed in the neighboring area ready to cross the border," General Pavel Tarasenko, commander of the group of Russian border guards in Tajikistan, said. "According to our information, the guerrillas' main forces are in the Kalay-Khumb detachment's section of Gornyy Badakhshan. There are daily attempts to cross the border and shell our subunits."

So far the guerrillas are only testing the border guards' defenses, looking for weak points. Despite the great length of the Tajik-Afghan border (over 1,000 km) there are not that many convenient crossing points. All the passes and passable gorges are controlled by border guards and motorized infantry, who find themselves under fire from rockets and automatic weapons. They retaliate by firing Uragans, forcing the gunmen to retreat deep into Afghanistan. But the attacks are still going on.

When I visited the Moskovskiy Detachment's 12th Border Subunit (the gunmen managed to capture it two years ago) things were quiet there. "The last bombardment was yesterday," subunit commander Senior Lieutenant Beketov said calmly. "The one before that was two days ago, and the one before that three days ago.

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There is constant firing, and days without an attack are rare."

The 12th Subunit blocks the gorge which is the route to the plains of Tajikistan and sticks in the craw of the mojahedin. A few years ago they used this route for the transit of drugs and weapons, which brought in tremendous profits, and now the "green caps" are there. The gunmen destroyed the old outpost, taking advantage of the border guards' weakness at the time. Now there is a real stronghold there, with fortifications, guns, and rocket launchers. Plus helicopters gunships, which are summoned when groups of "bearded mojahedin" are detected. The gunmen are unable to penetrate, but they are not abandoning their attempts. Thus the subunit is in combat mode.

...According to border intelligence, the next increase in guerrilla activity on the border will begin 26 May — the day that the next round of inter-Tajik talks begins.

Tajikistan: Opposition Criticizes Security Council Statement on Clashes

LD2405103296 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Uzbek 0300 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Professor Haji Akbar Turajonzoda, first deputy leader of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan and chairman of the Tajik opposition's peace talks negotiating delegation, said that the UN Security Council statement on the recent clashes was an unjustifiable and mercenary judgement. The statement was adopted under the influence of states like Russia. It is no secret that Russia is defending the Dushanbe regime.

The opposition forces sent a message to the UN secretary-general on 2 May. It said that the regime sent a force of more than 4,200 men to the Tavil Dara area from Dushanbe in violation of the cease-fire agreement. Russia is concerned at the daily failure of the [Tajik President Emomali] Rahmanov's army and this situation was the reason for the adoption of this document.

Moreover, General Hasan Abaza, head of the UN military observers in Tajikistan, reported five violations of the cease-fire agreement by the regime, and mentioned a new group of forces loyal to Rahmanov as additional proof [of Tajik government military build-up in Tavil Dara, Prof Haji Akbar Turajonzoda emphasized.

Tajikistan: Aga Khan To Aid Embattled East Tajiks

LD2405091896 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0300 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A Tajik United Opposition Forces delegation, led by Prof Sayed Abdullo Nuri, has arrived in Switzerland to meet the leader of the world Ismailis, Aga Khan IV. The leader of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan and the United Opposition Forces, Prof Sayed Abdullo Nuri, was accompanied on this occasion by his first deputy, Prof Haji Akbar Turajonzoda, and a deputy chairman of the (?Centre) of the Tajik Opposition Forces in the CIS, Khudoyberdi Kholiqnazarzoda. The Tajik opposition leaders met Aga Khan IV and the leaders of the Swiss Foreign Ministry. This meeting acquired great importance by introducing the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan and the United Opposition Forces to the Aga Khan and the Swiss foreign ministry.

The leader of the world Ismailis, Aga Khan IV, accepted the Tajik opposition leaders' proposal to provide food support for the people of the Karategin area, who are in a bad state due to the internal conflicts. The Aga Khan made a generous promise to the Tajik opposition leaders to help the Karategin area in various ways. [passage omitted]

Tajikistan: Government, Rebel Clashes Continuing in Gorno-Badakhshan

LD2305165496 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have received information about the continuation of heavy clashes between mujahedin of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan and Dushanbe government forces in the Sagirdasht area of Darvoz district in Gorno-Badakhshan.

Military sources of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan say that the clashes begun by the Dushanbe regime's paramilitaries still continue. These sources say that the clashes began two days ago when [government] forces using helicopters launched large-scale operations around mujahedin positions in the Sagirdasht area from the capital of the republic. We have not got precise information about casualties during the recent clashes in Sagirdasht area.

At the same time, it is said that Rakhmanov's government is acting against appeals to observe the cease-fire agreement and intends to avenge the loss of its forces in the recent battles.

Tajikistan: Government Forces Launch Counteroffensive in Garm

LD2305184696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1540 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, May 23 (Interfax) — Government troops in Tajikistan have launched a counteroffensive against armed opposition groups for the first time in two weeks in Garm, eastern Tajikistan.

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Government troops had assumed control over almost all towns and villages in Garm from Komsomolobad to the border with Kyrgyzstan, a well-informed military source in Dushanbe told Interfax.

There have been no reports of losses on either side.

The situation in the Tavil Dara region did not change significantly Thursday, with minor exchanges of fire continuing.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Latvian President Arrives for Official Visit

LD2205170496 Moscow Interfax in English 1402 GMT 22 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TASHKENT, May 22 (Interfax) — Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis arrived in Uzbekistan Wednesday for an official visit.

Ulmanis and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov had a meeting without their aides on the same day.

The Latvian delegation includes ministers, parliament members and businessmen.

The two countries established diplomatic relations in October 1992. Their relations are covered by a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty and an agreement on trade and economic cooperation.

Uzbekistan wants to use Latvian ports to export its goods to outside the CIS and to charter ships.

Latvia supplies minibuses, electronics, trams, farming equipment, perfumes, domestic appliances and medicinal drugs to Uzbekistan.

Nearly 1,000 Uzbeks reside in Latvia. They set up a cultural society Nur in 1991 in order to maintain and promote Uzbek culture.

Uzbekistan: Karimov: Uzbekistan Should Learn Democracy From Latvia

LD2305162396 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1300 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Latvian State President Guntis Ulmanis's official visit to Uzbekistan is continuing for a second day now. Our correspondent Arnis Krauze will tell us about it from Tashkent.

[Begin Krauze recording] We should be learning the implementation of democratic reform and the introduction of the system of opposition from Latvia, Uzbek President Islam Karimov said at a joint news conference given by the presidents of the two countries today. During these two days, talks between the delegations of the two countries focussed on economic relations. Almost 70 Latvian businessmen arrived in Uzbekistan together with the state president. Islam Karimov stressed at the news conference that Uzbekistan regards Latvia as a highly-developed country whose products can also compete on the European market.

However, during talks with Guntis Ulmanis yesterday, the Uzbek president made critical remarks about Latvian businessmen, who are very inactive and are not ready to shape economic relations more rapidly. Eight joint ventures involving Latvian capital are currently working in Tashkent. Islam Karimov said Uzbekistan is interested in a much more intensive use of Latvian ports. Last year, Latvia received $3 million for transit of Uzbek goods through our ports.

Of course, the talks between the two heads of state also touched on political issues, mainly in discussing relations with Russia and the situation in various regions of the world. So far, Latvia has managed to establish quite close relations with only two CIS countries; they are Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

In response to a question of how Uzbekistan assesses the Russian president's invitation for Latvia to join the CIS, Islam Karimov said that in his opinion Latvia has already chosen its course, and that is integration into European structures.

Speaking of Latvia's joining of NATO, the Uzbek president noted that Latvia has the right to decide for itself which organizations it wants to join. Such a view differs sharply from the views expressed by, for example, the Belarusian or Russian presidents.

Arnis Krauze, Latvian Radio, Tashkent. [end recording]

Uzbekistan: President, Latvian Counterpart Sign Political Declaration

LD2305164596 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1100 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Latvian and Uzbek presidents signed a joint political declaration in Tashkent today. In the declaration they undertake to continue to deepen bilateral relations and promote cooperation.

The foreign ministers, for their part, signed an intergovernmental accord on promotion and protection of mutual investments. Several agreements were also signed.

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Uzbekistan: President Karimov, Latvia's Ulmanis Hold Talks

LD2305191696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1525 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Uzbek President Islam Karimov met with Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis at Karimov's Duremen residence in Tashkent and talked mostly about the country's economic relations Thursday. The presidents signed a declaration on their intention to strengthen ties.

Karimov expressed interest in utilizing Latvia's non-freezing Baltic ports for shipping goods to Europe.

Latvia, for its part, is interested in Uzbekistan's geopolitical location as the window to Central Asia.

But Latvian businessmen are not working actively enough with Tashkent, Karimov told his counterpart.

Ulmanis attempted to disabuse Karimov of this notion, and was "partially successful," he told reporters afterwards.

"Yet I am still under the impression that Riga is not working actively and resourcefully enough to strengthen economic ties between our two countries," Ulmanis said. "Why should Latvia limit itself to business dealings only with its closest European neighbors? I think that we should use the economic potential of a country with rich resources like Uzbekistan. Tashkent, meanwhile, wants to work with us; it needs our ports and the professional ways of Latvian specialists."

The two also discussed CIS issues, saying that although the Soviet Union has collapsed, ties between the republics remain and should be developed. This should be done on a bilateral basis, they both agreed.

The leaders discussed the upcoming presidential elections in Russia, as well as other world political affairs.

The presidents continued discussions later in a wider forum with legislators, and ministerial and business representatives.

Foreign ministers Abdulaziz Komilov and Valdis Birkavs signed a pact for mutual support and defense of investments.

A number of pacts were signed on cooperation in the railroad industry, communications, legal aid and legal relations, customs support, and cultural areas.

The Latvian delegation will visit the ancient city of Samarkand Friday, where they will meet with local authorities and visit the main cultural and historical attractions. The delegation will head for home that day.

IF Note: Tashkent and Riga established diplomatic relations in October 1992. Karimov visited Latvia in June 1995. The two countries currently have a friendship and cooperation agreement.

The Latvian parliament and cabinet have set up task groups to find the optimal form of economic relations with Tashkent. Uzbekistan buys mini-buses, radios, streetcars, agricultural machinery, perfumes, household technology, and medicaments from Latvia.

There are roughly 1,000 Uzbeks permanently living in Latvia, where the Nur cultural society was formed in 1991, its main task being the maintenance and development of Uzbek culture.

Uzbekistan: Latvian President Leaves Tashkent for Samarkand

LD2405085496 Tashkent Radio Tashkent Network in Russian 0600 GMT 24 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dear listeners, we continue to report on the official visit by Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis to our country.

The official departure ceremony for the honored guest, Guntis Ulmanis, took place at the Durmen presidential residence today. [passage omitted]

In accordance with the visit schedule, the Latvian leader, Guntis Ulmanis, left for the ancient and blossoming city of Samarkand. The Latvian head of state will today go sightseeing and visit various ancient architectural monuments in Samarkand. Following the trip to Samarkand, Guntis Ulmanis and the members of the official delegation of the Latvian Republic led by him will leave for their fatherland this afternoon.

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Armenia

Armenia: Ter-Petrosyan on Russian-Armenian Military Cooperation

LD2305191296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1525 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Levon Ter-Petrosyan has spoken highly of the current level and the outlook for Armenian-Russian military cooperation.

A statement to this effect is contained in a message of greeting the Armenian president sent to the commander of the Russian army group in Transcaucasia, Colonel-General Fedor Reut on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Transcaucasian military district.

Ter-Petrosyan believes that the Russian military have played a "priceless role" in forming Armenia's national army, fostering its combat readiness and training Armenian soldiers and officers.

In his message the Armenian leader emphasized the role of the Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev in developing bilateral military cooperation. "A considerable contribution to fostering it has been made by Colonel-General Reut and the commander of the Russian military contingent in Armenia Major-General Aleksey Tretyakov," Ter-Petrosyan said in his message.

In turn the Armenian Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan said at a special ceremony in Yerevan on May 22 on the occasion of the Transcaucasian military district's jubilee he would like to note the effectiveness of Armenian-Russian military cooperation.

The Russian ambassador to Armenia Andrey Urnov pointed to the equitable nature of bilateral military cooperation, which, he said, was not targeted against any third countries, but on the contrary was a guarantee of stability in the region and the security of the people of Armenia and Russia.

General Reut was awarded a weapon with an engraving saying: "For personal contribution to fostering bilateral friendly relations." General Tretyakov received an award, too.

IF note: Earlier reports said that there was an armed attack on a car of the Transcaucasian military district's command in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on Wednesday. An office Volga car carrying the deputy commander of the Transcaucasian military district, Major-General Vasiliy Belchenko was fired on. The windshield and the rear window were smashed. No one was hurt.

IF sources have no doubts that the attackers tried to assassinate district commander Colonel-General Reut, who was riding in the car ahead of the attacked vehicle. According to the sources the attackers thought that General Reut, as usual, was in the second car for security reasons. However, Reut and his deputies had changed places on the way.

Armenia: Ter-Petrosyan Discusses Nagorno-Karabakh With U.S. Official

LD2305200196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1745 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, May 23 (Interfax) - Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Joseph Pressel discussed the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Yerevan Thursday evening, the Armenian presidential press office told Interfax.

The meeting was absolutely confidential.

During his visit to the region, Pressel wants to study the positions of the sides in the conflict before the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group arrive in the South Caucasus, a source in the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Interfax. He said the Minsk Group talks on Nagorno-Karabakh, which have been suspended for two months, are expected to be resumed in the second half of June.

The source said that one cannot say that the talks have stalled because during the two months, intensive work has been underway, which included meetings, visits to the region by Russian mediators and continuing contacts between the sides in the conflict.

At the same time he described as a difficult task further steps which would make the next stage of the talks more efficient.

He said the sides still disagree over such "major issues as the security of Nagorno-Karabakh, the status of the Lachin corridor and the final political and legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh."

"The gap between the sides' positions on these issues is still very big and the solutions which have been proposed by mediators so far have been unacceptable for the conflicting sides," he said.

Georgia

Georgia: CIS Executive Secretary Meets Leaders

LD2305171896 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian 1155 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 23 May — According to an IPRINDA correspondent, Ivan Korotchenya, the

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CIS executive secretary who is currently in Tbilisi on an official visit, held a news conference today.

On 22 May he met the chairman of the Georgian parliament [Zurab Zhvania], deputies from Abkhazia, and the Georgian president [Eduard Shevardnadze].

Korotchenya said that during a one-to-one meeting with Shevardnadze, they discussed the current situation in the CIS states. In Korotchenya's words, Georgia's position in the CIS is entirely dependent on Georgia itself as the structure of the CIS is democratic.

Touching on the Abkhaz conflict, Korotchenya noted that he supported a peaceful settlement of the conflict. He also told correspondents that at a meeting with an Abkhaz delegation he had expressed his dissatisfaction over the activity of CIS peacekeepers deployed in the conflict zone. In connection with this, Korotchenya met the commander of the peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone, General Vasil Yakushev who is currently ill and is at the Krtsanisi government residence. According to Yakushev, both sides express dissatisfaction over the peacekeepers' activities, but the general himself thinks that he is acting according to the mandate.

Regarding the forthcoming elections in Russia, Korotchenya is convinced that Boris Yeltsin will win.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Favors More Powers for CIS Secretariat

LD2305200496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1525 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovalyeva, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze believes the CIS secretariat should be given a number of new functions, among them control over the development and terms for the execution of CIS Council of the Heads of State decisions, Executive Secretary Ivan Korotchenya told Interfax after meeting with Shevardnadze Wednesday evening.

"There is no mechanism for carrying out the decisions of the council, or any control of their execution, within the framework of the CIS," he said. This is due to the fact that when the CIS was being formed, "the heads of state wanted to get further away from Russia, which was then associated with the centralized power of Soviet times."

Shevardnadze and Korotchenya also discussed issues of integration within the CIS, including the Russian-Belarusian union, and the Russian-Belarusian-Kazakh-Kyrgyz agreement.

Shevardnadze supports the creation of different levels of integration with the CIS, Korotchenya said.

The two spent some time discussing the settlement of Georgia's was with Abkhazia.

Admitting that the conflict took too long in being settled, the two agreed on the necessity of forming an international CIS peacekeeping force.

This force would work on a contract basis and would take orders directly from the Council of the Heads of State. This would "allow for the more effective use of the CIS's military and diplomatic potential in peacekeeping missions," they said.

Korotchenya also discussed ways of solving the Abkhazian conflict with the autonomous republic's official Prime Minister Zurab Erkvania.

The problem's resolution is now on "deep hold," Erkvania said. This is due in large part, he said, to the "complete inactivity" of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in Abkhazia.

Furthermore, "since over 12 percent of the republic's territory is controlled by separatists,," Erkvania said, Georgia is not joining the CIS Customs Union, nor is it signing a number of important CIS documents. "For all its wishes, the country would simply be unable to carry out the agreements' requirements," he said.

He called for "extremely firm economic sanctions against the separatist regime headed by Vladislav Ardzinba."

Korotchenya, for his part, admitted that the international community in general and the CIS specifically are not using their capabilities enough to solve the conflict.

Georgia: Defense Minister, UN Military Observer Discuss Abkhazia

LD2305182596 Tbilisi SAKINFORM in Russian 1245 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [No dateline as received] — The Georgian Armed Forces are capable of establishing stability in Gali district but [Abkhazian President] Vladislav Ardzinba's leadership does not give them the chance to do so, Georgian Defense Minister Vardiko Nadibaidze declared at a meeting with the chief UN military observer General Per Kjellstrom. The general said he would mediate in establishing a Georgian-Abkhaz militia in Gali district, adding that this could create realistic conditions for the safe return of refugees.

Gen. Kjellstrom also met Avtandil Ioseliani, the first deputy security minister of Georgia. They discussed the

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return of refugees in the security zone as well as an exchange of prisoners of war.

Georgia: Assassination Attempt on Russian Military Official Denied

LD2305170596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1147 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, May 23 (Interfax) — Georgia presidential spokesman Vakhtang Abashidze has said there has was no assassination attempt or attack on Russian Deputy Military Commander for the South Caucasus Vasiliy Belchenko.

"This was established by competent bodies of Georgia," he told a news briefing in Tbilisi on Thursday.

The spokesman denied Russian media reports about an alleged attack on the Russian military official on Wednesday, describing them as "a planned action aimed at causing tension between the Georgian government and Russian troops deployed in the South Caucasus states."

In the meantime, senior spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry Yuriy Mamchur reaffirmed that the car Belchenko was travelling from Tbilisi to the city airport was damaged. But he did not elaborate apart from saying it is still early to make any conclusions before a formal investigation is over.

The Georgian Defense Ministry claims the windscreen of the commander's car was broken by a stone flying from under the wheels of a car before it.

Earlier the press office of the Russian troops deployed in the region told Interfax that two blows landed on the car's windscreen and one on its side, which was dented.

No one was hurt.

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Estonia

Estonia: Results of Russian-Estonian Border Talks 'Modest'

LD2305184296 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1700 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Another round of Estonian-Russian border talks ended in Pskov today. Here is a telephone interview with Raul Malk, the leader of the Estonian delegation.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Raul Malk, before this round of Estonian-Russian border talks you were rather skeptical about the outcome. How did it go?

[Malk] The results of this round were modest. There was a lot of hard work, but it is not possible to talk about any progress regarding the text of an agreement or the draft text of the declaration proposed by us.

Matters pertaining to the location of the border were discussed in great detail. Although this round has slightly reduced the volume of some outstanding issues, it is still too early to talk about getting close to final solutions.

We had a very thorough discussion about the location of the border across the Peipsi and Lammijarv Lakes. Estonia proceeds from the coordinates as per the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty, which have not been questioned in any later decision and it has been repeated that this line remains unchanged. The Russian side has deployed as an argument a map from 1921, allegedly signed by Viktor Vaht. So here we have not reached an agreement — there is a clear difference between these lines.

We have discussed the interests of the sides in various areas and here we are talking about 10 square kilometers in total between us. The interests of the Russian side are on the lakes and they are about twice the area of these Estonia is concerned about.

[Correspondent] I understand that one cannot talk about any concrete agreements this time?

[Malk] We did not sign any documents other than protocols simply reflecting on current results of our work.

[Correspondent] What will happen next?

[Malk] For the next round, we have invited the Russian side to Estonia for 9th and 10th July. The Russian side accepted the invitation in principle, but will consider the dates, therefore we do not yet have the answer whether the Russian side agrees to these dates. [end recording]

Estonia: No Concessions Made to Russia Over Tartu Consular Office

WS2305133896 Tallinn BNS in English 0904 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, May 23, BNS — The Foreign Ministry declares that Estonia made no concessions to Russia by allowing it to open a consular office in Tartu and Russian citizens in Estonia to participate in Russian presidential elections.

Estonia did not back down by giving Russia permission to establish a consular office in Tartu, because it had never had any objections to this, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry told BNS. "It was rather Russia who yielded, as it sought permission to open a consulate general in Tartu," he said.

The spokesman said that nor did the possible opening of polling stations for the presidential elections in other places besides Tallinn, Tartu and Narva constitute a concession.

"A precondition for the opening of additional polling stations is that Russia presents to us a complete list of Russian citizens," he said. "It is absolutely necessary for Estonia to get a full list of Russian citizens."

Moscow is seeking permission to open additional polling stations in Tallinn and the northeast Estonian cities of Sillamae and Narva.

The spokesman admitted, however, that actually Estonia had always had to make compromises in its relations with its eastern neighbor. "As to full-blown concessions, Estonia is approaching the boundary beyond which the question is whether we remain a sovereign state or give it up," he said.

In his words, the areas in which the Baltic state could not retreat further were the laws on citizenship and language and the Tartu Peace Treaty.

The spokesman denied that Estonia's foreign policy vis-a-vis Russia had become overfriendly. "It does not pay to draw far-reaching conclusions," he said. "Estonian-Russian relations are not as bad as they may seem."

Latvia

Latvia: Prime Minister, Ukraine's Moroz Discuss Trade Relations

LD2305190796 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1335 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riga [no date as received] — Oleksandr Moroz, head of the Ukrainian Supreme Council noted at a meeting with Latvian Prime Minister

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Andris Skele the unsatisfactory condition of the trade turnover between the two states, which, he believes, is partly due to "the fault of the state administration," and the insufficiently systematic work of the economic structures of Ukraine and Latvia.

Skele has supported Moroz's proposal on increasing cooperation in the Baltic-Black Sea region. He said that it was necessary to prepare and hold negotiations on creating the so-called "economic corridor" between the Baltic and Black Seas with simplified customs transport rules, which would considerably "liven up the trade and economic turnover between the member states of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Baltic Assembly." Skele is convinced that such a regime would become "a stabilizing factor in the region."

Skele also stressed Ukraine's significant role in supplying the world market with food. He said that international experts forecast an acute shortage of food in 20 years because of the limited land and natural resources in the majority of countries.

Latvia: Moroz: Kiev Disapproves of Latvia's Desire To Join NATO

LD2305193096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1708 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] RIGA, May 23 (Interfax) — Ukraine does not sympathize with Latvia's desire to join NATO and believes that this would "harm other countries," Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Chairman Oleksandr Moroz said at a news conference in Riga Thursday at the end of his official visit there.

There is no saying now where the NATO expansion eastward will end and how the security and interests of other countries will be recognized, he said.

"Ukraine believes that a new security system without military-political blocs should be created now," Moroz said.

"Human rights are restricted" in Latvia now, especially for retired Soviet Army servicemen residing in the country, he believes. "All Ukrainians staying in Latvia and intending to reside there must acquire Latvian citizenship and this problem should be tackled by parliaments of the two countries," Moroz said.

"All Latvians residing in Ukraine became Ukrainian citizens without any restrictions and enjoy equal rights with other citizens," he continued.

Moroz and his Latvian counterpart, Ilga Kreituse, agreed that "despite sharp discussions during the visit, the two sides believe that the dialog and cooperation between the two countries should continue and the visit made a significant contribution to this."

Kreituse admitted that "the problems facing Ukrainians in Latvia will have to be tackled."

Latvia: Moroz: Riga Should Model Ethnic Relations of Ukraine

LD2305190696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1440 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riga — A Ukrainian parliamentary delegation today visited the Riga Ukrainian School, the only one of its kind in Latvia, where it met representatives of the Ukrainian public organizations of Latvia, in particular, representatives of "The Ukrainian Motherland," "The Return," and the Latvian-Ukrainian cultural center.

According to a UNIAN correspondent, Oleksandr Moroz stressed that Latvia should draw on Ukraine's example of solving ethnic issues, because "in Latvia not all is well in that respect."

Moroz also promised to raise with the relevant structures in Ukraine the issue of the need for financial assistance in the matter of publishing a Ukrainian newspaper of Latvia or that of the three Baltic states.

Moroz expressed his intention to raise with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko the issue of initiating an agreement on a simplified visa regime between the two countries.

The representatives of Ukrainian communities spoke of the need to give a legal status to the rights of Ukrainians in Latvia to receive higher education in Ukraine on equal conditions with Ukrainian citizens.

Latvia: Swedish Military Chief Says Baltbat Forces Ready for IFOR

LD2305193396 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1300 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Owe Wiktorin, the commander in chief of the Swedish Armed Forces today concluded a two-day visit to Latvia. He answered correspondents' questions before flying off to Sweden. Latvian Radio found out how the Swedish Armed Forces commander assesses the preparedness of the BaltBat [Baltic Battalion] soldiers for the NATO Implementation Force [IFOR] peacekeeping operations, as the professionalism of Latvian soldiers was recently sharply criticized in the Swedish press.

[Begin Wiktorin recording in English fading into Latvian translation] Let me first say that comments in the Swedish press and my opinion of the Latvian Armed

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Forces are of course different. On this visit, it has been shown in the professional sense that the military training of the Adazi mobile infantry brigade and the Baltic peacekeeping battalion is of a high professional level. At present training has not begun with heavy arms, but training with light weapons has confirmed the initial opinion that your soldiers have [words indistinct] and for the rest of the [word indistinct] time. Therefore we believe that the soldiers of the Baltic battalion are sufficiently trained to take part in the NATO IFOR peacekeeping operations. Then there is the question of quantity, of numbers. At present it is very small [words indistinct]. I want also to add that more than 60 Latvian military personnel have gained military training with the Swedish military academy. We have helped the Baltic battalion with transport, [word indistinct] clothing, [?communications] systems. In my opinion it is our duty to assist our close Baltic neighbors, whose military thinking is similar to our own. [end recording]

Lithuania

Lithuania: Stankevicius Receives Russian Deputy Premier in Vilnius

LD2305203996 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1600 GMT 23 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lithuanian Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevicius today received a delegation from the Russian Federation, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Bolshakov, the government's spokesman told the ELTA news agency.

In talks lasting an hour, various problems of bilateral relations were discussed. The Russian deputy prime minister, who is also head of the Russian delegation in the bilateral commission, urged the maintaining of long-established manufacturing links, the setting up of joint ventures, and the targeting of western markets.

Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevicius raised several problems concerning cooperation between the states. The proposal submitted by Lithuania and Poland to set up the Nemunas regional cooperation project was presented to the Russian deputy prime Minister. The project envisages that four states situated in the [Nemunas river] basin will participate.

Yuriy Matochkin, who represented the Kaliningrad region's administration in the talks, supported the idea.

On Lithuania's initiative, much time was devoted to discussing the problem of refugees.

The issue of the need to return Lithuania's historical archives was also raised on Lithuania's initiative.

Discussion of the issue of Vnesheconombank debts to Lithuanian citizens proceeded with great difficulty. Mr. Bolshakov confirmed that the Russian prime minister has received a letter on this issue from Stankevicius. However, the bank has now unexpectedly raised new doubts that, allegedly, some of the depositors have moved to Russia.

In contrast to what he was saying at other negotiations, the head of the Russian delegation said that he cannot tell the exact date when the debts will be repaid to Lithuanian citizens. We would like to recall here that we are talking about deposits worth $10 million placed in the bank by private depositors. Russia refuses to repay the deposits of enterprises and organizations.

The joint view was expressed at the talks that the bilateral commission has taken a positive first step in the negotiations. It has been decided that the commission's work will not be suspended for the summer vacation and that real decisions will soon be reached.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Bolshakov hopes that today's meeting of leaders of the intergovernmental commission and the protocol which was signed at its conclusion will lay the foundations for concluding some agreements in a couple of months time in which both countries are interested.

However, first we intend to analyze bilateral economic relations, the Russian deputy prime minister said at a news conference today, after the meeting with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas, Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevicius, and Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys, the ELTA news agency reports.

The Lithuanian-Russian governmental commission for the promotion of economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation was set up more than a year ago. However, Povilas Gylys and Aleksey Bolshakov, chairmen of the commission, met for the first time.

It is envisaged that by the end of June proposals will be exchanged by both sides and the priority issues to be solved at the working group level will be determined. The first meeting will be held at the end of August or the beginning of September.

According to Bolshakov, while stating our official position, the Russian leaders are not making any negative statements with regard to the Baltic states. Leaders of political parties and parliamentary factions may say what they like, this is their business, the leader of the Russian delegation said remarking about some utterances made by individual Russian politicians or specialists in politics in which a negative view on Lithuania's aspirations to join NATO, the European Union, and some other organizations was expressed.

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Russia is not avoiding a solution to the problem of returning the Lithuanian embassy buildings in Rome and Paris. However, the issues of diplomatic property have not been resolved in Russia itself either, Bolshakov said.

Before concluding a one-day visit to Lithuania, the Russian deputy prime minister made a sightseeing tour of Vilnius and visited the Russian Embassy in Vilnius.

Lithuania: Brazauskas, Bolshakov Confident of End of Border Dispute

LD2305192196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1525 GMT 23 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovaleva, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas and Deputy Russian Prime Minister Aleksey Bolshakov voiced the confidence during their meeting in Vilnius on Thursday that the border dispute between the two countries will be settled.

During the meeting it was noted that three "disputable points" in the Baltic Sea and in the Kurskiy Zaliv, remain to be settled at the border negotiations, Lithuanian presidential press secretary Lydia Sabajevaite told Interfax.

Brazauskas and Bolshakov noted "the acuteness of the illegal migration problem for both countries," she said. The two sides admitted that refugees from Asian countries, including from Pakistan, Afghanistan and CIS republics had entered Lithuania via Russia.

Brazauskas and Bolshakov noted the need to sign an interstate agreement which would solve this problem, she said.

Then Brazauskas raised the question of the return of the buildings of the former Lithuanian embassies in Rome and Paris which now belong to Russia, and the money of Lithuanian investors who had deposits in the USSR Vnesheconombank.

On the subject of trade relations with Russia, the Lithuanian president spoke of the need to reduce customs duties for some Lithuanian goods set by the Russian side. According to the press secretary, Bolshakov assured Brazauskas that this problem will be solved in the near future when the Kaliningrad region of Russia receives the status of a free economic zone.

He asked Brazauskas to help open more polling stations for the elections of the Russian president in Lithuania. The Russian side plans to open such stations in the cities of Kaunas and Siauliai.

She quoted the president as saying that Lithuania will possibly give a positive solution to the problem.

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